DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 200 043 FL 012 232

AUTHOR House, Juliane M.
TITLE Theoretical Aspects of Translation.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 104p.; Master's Thesis, University of Toronto.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Applied Linguistics; Biculturalism; Bilingualism; Descriptive Linguistics; Language Research; Language Universals; Linguistic Theory; Second Language Instruction; *Semantics; Sociolinguistics; Structural Analysis (Linguistics); *Translation

ABSTRACT

This study attempts to bring some clarification into the concept of translation, especially into the theoretical problems presented by the difficulties of translation. The following aspects of the question are treated: (1) translation in the past and present, including the controversy over translation as an art or a science, the relevance of linguistics to translation, and translation studied from a linguistic point of view; (2) theoretical problems, with special attention to the impossibilities of translation, various structuralist approaches to meaning, as well as two versions of the hypothesis that different languages embody different world-views, which provide strong arguments against the possibility of translation; and (3) theories of the importance of the cultural and situational context in translation, as well as proposals of language universals, which supply arguments for translatability. It is seen that translatability finds its limits under certain specifiable conditions. The study concludes with a discussion of some possible consequences of the findings for the use of translation in the foreign language classroom. (Author/AMH)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED200043

# THEORETICAL ASPECTS OF TRANSLATION

by

JULIANE M. HOUSE

A Thesis submitted in conformity with the

requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in the

University of Toronto

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Juliane M. House

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

© Juliane M. House 1971

FL 010 232

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I should like to thank Dr. H. H. Stern and Dr. E. Brent for their helpful comments, criticisms, and suggestions throughout the preparation of this study.

Thanks are also due to Miss Lucy C. Meer for typing the final version.

J. M. H.

TABLE OF CONTENTS


| Chapter | | Page |
|---|---|---|
| I. | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| | A. Purpose of the Study | 1 |
| | B. Organization of the Study | 3 |
| II. | PAST AND PRESENT TREATMENTS OF TRANSLATION: ART OR SCIENCE? | 4 |
| III. | TOWARD A PRECISE DEFINITION OF TRANSLATION | 14 |
| | A. Basic Definitions of Translation | 14 |
| | B. Different Kinds of Translation | 17 |
| IV. | TRANSLATABILITY AND MEANING I | 23 |
| | A. Traditional Views | 25 |
| | B. Structuralist Views | 27 |
| | C. Whorfian Views | 40 |
| V. | TRANSLATABILITY AND MEANING II | 60 |
| | A. Extralinguistic Context | 60 |
| | B. Universals of Language | 66 |
| | C. Limits of Translatability | 81 |
| VI. | OUTLOOK | 88 |
| BIBLIOGRAPHY | | 90 |

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

### A. Purpose of the Study

Ever since the proposal of so-called "Direct Methods" and the consequent opposition against the traditional or grammar-translation method, translation as a means in language teaching has come under severe criticism. Recently, with the advent of the "Audio-Lingual Revolution", the usefulness of translation has again been questioned, and more often than not translation has been blamed for the lack of success of language teaching. It is claimed that translation, as a cross-linguistic technique, does more harm than good, because the native language only interferes with the learning of the foreign language. Also, translation as such is often called a rather unnatural activity, or a highly specialized art, which is not at all related to how students actually function in a foreign language environment. The relevance of translation, it is said, is really minimal--unless the "art of translation" itself and not competence in the foreign language is one's objective. But, as Nelson Brooks states, for a foreign language classroom--which is not a translator's institute,

> the most serious of all false objectives is translation...Translation is at once too difficult and too damaging to the learner to be part of his activities until he has reached a high level of achievement in the second language. (Brooks, 1964: 110)

But, if and when the learner has reached this "high level of achievement", he will not have to resort to translation anyway.

On the other hand, C. J. Dodson (1967), in his proposal of the bilingual method in language teaching, spoke for the use of translation in the foreign language classroom; H. W. Kirkwood (1966) suggested the use of translation as a basis for contrastive linguistic analysis. Also, in the practice of language teaching, translation is still a popular, widely used technique, and there are many who whole-heartedly support C. B. Thornton-Smith (1967) in his making a decided "case for translation".

In short, translation is today still a highly controversial topic. However, although there is a great deal of discussion about translation, one may say that

> ... the general concept of translation nevertheless remains not completely clarified and defined, a result of which is the incompetent use made of it in the teaching of foreign languages. (Belyayev, 1963: 164-5)

In this study, we are not concerned with making either a case for, or against translation in the teaching of foreign languages. Rather, it is the purpose of this background study to bring some clarification into the concept of translation, and especially into the theoretical problems presented by the difficulties of translation. This discussion, in turn, may be helpful in the use of translation in the foreign language classroom.

B. Organization of the Study

We shall first look into the treatments of translation in the past and present, especially into the notorious controversy over translation as an art or a science. We shall discuss the relevance of linguistics to translation, and then proceed to examine translation from a linguistic point of view.

After having defined translation and considered various kinds of translation, we investigate its theoretical problems: the impossibilities and possibilities of translation. In particular, we shall review various structuralist approaches to meaning, as well as two versions of the hypothesis that different languages embody different world-views, which provide strong arguments against the possibility of translation. On the other hand, theories of the importance of the cultural and situational context in translation, as well as proposals of language universals will supply arguments for translatability. We shall see that translatability finds its limits under certain specifiable conditions. Finally, we shall discuss some possible consequences of our findings for the use of translation in the foreign language classroom.

## CHAPTER II

## PAST AND PRESENT TREATMENTS OF TRANSLATION: ART OR SCIENCE?

The practice of translation is as ancient as the tower of Babel. From the earliest times of civilization translators have fulfilled an important social function in propagating knowledge and facilitating communication across language barriers. Treatises on translation have an equally long tradition. Translation has been quite a popular subject for literary reflections (cf. Störig, 1963). Professional translators as well as philologists, poets, and philosophers, who were translators on the side, wrote widely about their insights into the problems of translation. They made valuable contributions, but did never really proceed beyond an anecdotal and aphoristic-impressionistic treatment of the subject. The quality of the finished product was given more attention than the actual process of translation, and numerous unrelated examples of more or less successful translations were listed. Questions of the "faithfulness to the original", retention of the specific flavour, local colour or spirit of the original over against a naturalness of the translation and the "pleasure of the reader" were discussed at length (e.g. Postgate, 1922: 3-7). The young would-be translator was confronted with a bewildering profusion of alternative principles. Should a translation give the words or the ideas of the original, read like an



Out S

original or like a translation, reflect the style of the author or of the translator, be free to add to, or omit from, the original, or never do so? (Savory, 1968: 50)

Historical descriptions of translation activities thrqugh the centuries with reference to the socio-cultural and especially the literary background are also readily found (e.g. Amos, 1920). Furthermore, the missions and trials of influential translators were explored, and, in general, the intellectual faculties and "intuitive" talents of the individual translator who "creates" (or re-creates) his work were considered to be crucial. The difficulties of translation were thus mostly relegated to the individual's subjective qualifications which were often described in a somewhat vague and mysterious manner:

> The creation of auseful translation presupposes not only great linguistic knowledge as well as complete mastering of one's own language but also requires a feeling for style, instinct, and sensitivity towards the grasping of the dispositional content. (Freudenthal, 1942: 65)

Since, until recently, literary works were considered to be most important for translation, literary translation was the focus of attention. The question of how to translate the classics has thus been a most stimulating source of controversy over the centuries. Reflections on the best ways of rendering Horatian Sapphics and Alcaics, and of dealing with quasi-metrical prose were discussed in great detail. Sir Alexander Fraser Tytler (1907: 1) classified translation as "a department of literature". So did Peter Mark Roget (1852: xv) in his introduction to the Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases (1947).

Translation taken as artistic reproduction was considered to be intimately connected with the course of literary development, the theory of translation thus becoming "a vital part of our literary history" (Amos, 1920: xiii). Within this general framework, translation was considered to be an art.

With the increasingly rapid means of communication and transportation facilitating the emergence of both a global diplomacy and a global science and technology, a different kind of translation: pragmatic, i.e., non-literary translation has gained in importance. With its ascendance, a different type of interest in translation has made itself felt: translation as a scientific task to be considered not in terms of literary history but in terms of the newly independent discipline of linguistics.

In 1953, a Russian linguist, Andrei Fedorov, first makes a claim to treat translation as primarily a linguistic operation. Fedorov considers language, and with it, linguistics, the science of language, to be the one and only common denominator of all the various types of translations. He even wants to establish translation theory as a separate linguistic discipline.

Soon afterwards, the International Journal of American Linguistics (IJAL, 1954) devotes an entire issue to translation. American linguists like C. F. Voegelin, Charles F. Hockett, and others treat translation from a structuralist and anthropological point of view. Voegelin (1954) presents an anthropological model of "multiple stage translation" featuring, instead of the traditional two-step translation

from interlinear to free translation, eight stages of progressively "smoother" translations. Hockett (1954) also suggests a revision of the simple dichotomy of literal versus "loose" translation. He tries to arrive at various degrees of literalness and freedom of translation through an application of the notion of hierarchical or immediate constituent structure to the process of translation. He proposes that there are as many stages of literalness and freedom in the translation of a construction, as there are levels of immediate constituent structure.

In 1958, two French Canadian linguists, J. P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet investigate the problems of translation from English to French. Despite the fact that their work bears the title Stylistique comparée du francais et de l'anglais, the authors base their theory firmly on Saussure's linguistic theory demanding that translation be recognized as a primarily linguistic phenomenon.

After these pioneering attempts to look at translation from a linguistic point of view, many subsequent compilations of treatises and essays on translation like On Translation (Brower, 1966) and Aspects of Translation (Booth, 1958) include at least one contribution by a linguist.

With the works of Rudolf W. Jumpelt (1961), Georges Mounin (1963), Otto Kade (1968), and especially John C. Catford (1965), Eugene A. Nida (1964;1969) and Nida and Taber (1969) in the sixties, the claim that translation be considered an object of scientific investigation has been further substantiated.

Jumpelt (1961) investigates the special problems of the translation of scientific and technical texts from a linguistic point of view, Mounin (1963) deals with the implications of various linguistic theories on the possibilities of translation. Kade's (1968) contribution to the development of a theory of translation is based on linguistic and communication theory. At two international conferences on "the science of translation" held in 1965 and 1970 at the University of Leipzig in East Germany,[1] where Kade has delivered important papers, translation is considered to be a modification of intralinguistic communication; it is treated as an instance of "code change" involving three basic elements: the system of linguistic signs used in communication, phenomena of objective reality to be communicated, and the communication partners.

Catford (1965) attempts to apply the Firthian and neo-Firthian linguistic theories to translation. He particularly emphasizes the fact that translation must be functional, that a translation must fulfill the same function in a given situation as the original did.

Nida (1964;1969) and Nida and Taber (1969) also stress the importance of the concept of functional or "dynamic equivalence" in translation, i.e. the response of the receptor must be essentially like that of the original receptor. They further point to the special

---

[1]For a report on the 1965 conference see Müller and Rothenhagen (1966); the minutes of the 1970 conference will appear in a special issue of the periodical Fremdsprachen in 1972. For a brief discussion of the 1970 conference see Koller (1971).

relevance of transformational-generative grammar for translation: in translation one does not go from one set of surface structures to another. Rather, translation involves the three stages of (1) analysis, i.e. a process of back-transforming surface structure expressions to the underlying structures, (2) transfer from the underlying structure in the source language to the corresponding underlying structure in the receptor language, and (3) restructuring in the receptor language.

Similarly, Dwight Bolinger (1965/66) points out that the technique of transformations may be applied to "structural translation" or "transformulation"; and John B. Walmsley (1970) and P.A.M. Seuren (1969) also suggest a more precise description of translation by looking at it from the point of view of transformational-generative grammar: source language text analysis in terms of deep structure, transfer, and reconstitution into the surface structure of the target language.

At a symposium held at the University of Heidelberg, Wolfgang Dressler (1970) suggests that the application of so-called "Suprasyntax" or "Textsyntax" to translation is best suited to illuminate translation problems, because equivalence of the entire text is more important in translation than equivalence of smaller units like the sentence.

The treatment of translation from a linguistic point of view has been given further impetus through the increasing research into the possibilities of machine translation, for which a thorough linguistic description of translation proved to be absolutely essential. Thus

it is felt that in translation analysis, problems of grammatical and semantic structure should be given priority over aesthetic and stylistic matters.

However, there has also been quite a pronounced opposition to all these attempts at regarding translation as "a science" instead of an art, to treating it scientifically within the framework of linguistics. Thus, Théodore Savory (1968: 49) maintains that it is impossible to ever objectify translation, i.e. to try to find certain general laws or rules and to explain the impossibilities and possibilities of translation. Savory restates the traditional position of regarding translation as an art--incapable of being reduced to principles.

Rolf Kloepfer (1967) rejects any relevance of linguistics for literary translation. He maintains that such heterogeneous registers[2] as the language of science and the language of literature cannot be simply equated in a linguistic treatment of translation. Kade (1968: 49-50) tries to avoid the issue altogether: he states bluntly that the question whether and how linguistics is relevant for the "art of literary translation" is beyond his treatment of translation.

Edmond Cary (1957) joins Savory in maintaining that it is futile to try to derive objective criteria for translation by looking to the science of linguistics. In his criticism of Fedorov's statement that language is the common denominator of all translations, Cary states that--far from being relevant for translation--this common denominator is but a formal abstraction, and it is impossible to treat

---

[2]For a discussion of various definitions of register see J. Ellis and J. N. Ure (1969).

different kinds of translation jointly:

> Pour traduire, il faut connaître les langues, mais la difficulté du problème réside justement dans le fait que traduire de la littérature est ... une opération littéraire, traduire dès vers, une opération poétique ... traduire un livre d'enfant ou un texte technique est, chaque fois, une opération sui generis, ... irréducible à un exercice linguistique, fût-il qualifié d'activité créatrice. (Cary, 1957: 186)

Thus Cary only resumes the century-old position of taking the translator's knowledge of the source and target languages as tacitly given, proceeding from there to look for a solution of translation difficulties elsewhere. It is this very knowledge of language, of the abstract system of "la langue", which is for Saussure the only proper norm for a description of linguistic phenomena.[3]

But can translation be treated with reference to langue? Can it be dealt with in such an abstract way? Bolinger writes that translation

> ... may be viewed amorphously as the rendition of a text from one language to another. This is translation from the standpoint of "la parole": the text, the act of speech or writing is the thing. Or it may be viewed as a systematic comparison of two languages: this is translation from the standpoint of "la langue". (Bolinger, 1965/66: 130)

---

[3] In contrast to parole, the personal actualization of speech, Saussure (1949) posits langue, the social side of speech, which is a static system that cannot be created or changed by individuals, and that exists only on account of an imaginary contract signed by the members of a speech community.

What Bolinger calls "translation from the standpoint of 'la langue'" is the subject matter of contrastive linguistics. Translation in the conventional use of the term is "the rendition of a text from one language to another", i.e. a matter of parole.

According to Kade (1968: 51), translation is not a phenomena of langue but of parole. Jumpelt (1961: 15) writes that the texts to be translated belong partly to the realm of parole: they are individual acts of speech or writing which cannot be directly equated with the source language system. Equally, the translated text is a specific, partly individual actualization of the target language. In translating, we do not transfer one language into another, but specific elements of the language systems together with individual elements of the author's and our own personal repertoire. Since translation belongs partly to parole, which can never be completely objectified (see above, p. 10), it follows that part of translation will resist any attempt of scientific objectivization: "Diesen Teil bilden die von Originalautor und Übersetzer eingebrachten persönlichen Züge ..." (Jumpelt, 1961: 15).

It is this part to which Savory (1968), Kloepfer (1967), Cary (1957) and their many predecessors are referring when they insist on translation being an individual, creative act. Thus, despite the "common linguistic denominator", there are many subjective facets in translation; the dichotomy of translation as an art versus translation as a science does not really hold: translation is both an art and a science.

R. H. Robins expresses this very view of translation when he writes that

> ... though its principles can be referred to linguistic science, its achievement is more in the nature of an art, in which individual and personal feeling for the artistic possibilities of the two languages is of the highest importance. (Robins, 1964: 31)

And Mounin states: "On peut...dire que, comme la médecine, la traduction reste un art, mais un art fondé sur une science" (1963: 16-7).

Even if the science of linguistics can thus not clarify <u>all</u> the problems involved in translation, it can nevertheless provide a basis and a framework for illuminating the theoretical problems of the impossibilities and possibilities of translation: linguistics offers us a precise terminology with which to talk about and come to grips with these problems, thus leading us beyond a deliberation of imponderables, as the "pleasure of the reader" and the "faithfulness to the original". Without denying the ultimately subjective character of translation, we can, therefore, at the same time recognize the legitimacy of placing translation within the frame of reference of linguistics.

It seems best to take the linguistic aspects of translation as a basis; Fedorov is right, any translation is above all a linguistic operation. From the sound basis of a preliminary linguistic discussion of translation, all other considerations concerning translation as an art may safely proceed.

## CHAPTER III

## TOWARD A PRECISE DEFINITION OF TRANSLATION

### A. Basic Definitions of Translation

Before considering the theoretical problems of the impossibilities and possibilities of translation, it is necessary to define what is meant by translation. Linguists of different schools offer various definitions, each stressing certain aspects of the phenomenon of translation.

1. With reference to Uriel Weinreich (1963: 1), who refers to the alternate use of two or more languages by the same persons as "languages in contact", and who regards the practice of alternately using two languages as "bilingualism", the French linguist Georges Mounin defines translation as a special instance of languages in contact, and of bilingualism: "La traduction...est un contact de langues, est un fait de bilinguisme" (1963: 4). Mounin considers translation to be a dynamic process of two languages and two cultures being brought together: the more contact there has been between two languages and cultures, the easier translation will be in the future; one translation builds upon the other in a never-ending chain.

2. From the viewpoint of German neo-Humboldtian linguistics or "Sprachinhaltsforschung", Rudolf W. Jumpelt defines translation in a "mentalistic" manner as a kind of mental configuration: "ein Umsetzen

von geistigen 'Gegenständen' aus der Zwischenwelt einer Sprache in die einer anderen" (1961: 11). Johann Leo Weisgerber (1955) also considers translation to be a kind of conversion of the spiritual structure of one language into the other. And Werner Winter, in a similar vein, states that:

> To translate is to replace the formulation of one interpretation of a segment of the universe around us and within us by another formulation as equivalent as possible. (Winter, 1961: 68)

3. A very different definition of translation is offered by the British linguists M.A. K. Halliday, Angus McIntosh, and Peter Strevens (1964). In drawing attention to the importance of the "context of the situation", they write: "We regard translation as the relation between two or more texts playing an identical part in an identical situation" (1964: 124), with "identical" being defined as a more-or-less concept rather than an absolute one. In translating one tries to establish not formal equivalence but rather "contextual equivalence": the French j'ai soif and the English I am thirsty are contextually equivalent (have the same "meaning") in that they fulfill, more or less, the same function in a given situation.

4. From the standpoint of communication theory, Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber define translation as

> ..reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. (Nida and Taber, 1969: 12)

Similarly, Roman Jakobson states that "translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes" (1966: 233).

5. Linguists engaged in research into machine translation offer the most precise definitions of translation. Leon Dostert who believes that the translator is confronted with two structures, the cultural structure and the linguistic structure, which interact, defines translation in the following way:

> Translation is that branch of the applied science of language which is specifically concerned with the problem--or the fact--of transference of meaning from one patterned set of symbols occurring in a given culture (the original language) into another set of patterned symbols occurring in another culture (the "final" language). (Dostert, 1955a: 124)

Dostert also stresses the fact that this transference of meaning should be effected with a "minimum of alteration of meaning and cultural contents" (1955b: 77).

Emile Delavenay, who has also written on the subject of machine translation, gives a definition of translation with reference to the two planes of expression and content (or meaning):

> To translate from a given language A into a given language B is to attempt to reconstitute with the system of expression of language B, the meaning of a sentence or string of sentences expressed in language A by means of the system of expression peculiar to that language. (Delavenay, 1960: 45)

Each of these definitions points to essential features of the phenomenon of translation: languages in contact, interpretation of universe, relation of text to situation, message equivalent, relevance of cultural context, reconstitution of meaning with different system of expression. The fact that translation is essentially a semantic operation, one that deals primarily with the establishment of "equiva-

lence in difference", evolves quite clearly from most definitions. Many other linguists confirm this principle: Vinay and Darbelnet write: "Le traducteur ... part du sens et effectue toutes ses opérations de transfert à l'intérieur du domaine sémantique" (1958: 37).

However, if, in translating, we aim with Nida at the "closest natural equivalent" of the source language message, we have to take into consideration a multitude of elements and relationships, primarily of a semantic nature, but also partly relating to the formal features of the text. Since these elements and relationships are never identical in two languages, they cannot be replaced or substituted in any simple way. All translation is a decision process requiring a choice between many variables.

> ... (the translator) is constantly faced by a series of polar distinction which force him to choose content as opposed to form, meaning as opposed to style, equivalence as opposed to identity, the closest equivalence as opposed to any equivalence, and naturalness as opposed to formal correspondence. (Nida and Taber, 1969: 14)

B. Different Kinds of Translation

1. Within the general framework of semiotics, Roman Jakobson distinguishes three basic genres of translation defined in the following way:

> (1) Intralingual translation or <u>rewording</u> is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs of the same language.
>
> (2) Interlingual translation or <u>translation proper</u> is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language.
>
> (3) Intersemiotic translation or <u>transmutation</u> is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of non-verbal sign system.
>
> (Jakobson, 1966: 233)

Only the second kind of translation, interlingual translation, will be considered in our treatment of the theoretical problems of translation.

2. J. C. Catford (1965: 20-6;56-72) distinguishes three general categories of translation in terms of (1) the extent, (2) the levels, (3) the ranks of translation. Consequently, he arrives at three dichotomies: full translation versus partial translation, total translation versus restricted translation, and rank-bound translation versus unbounded translation.

A full translation is one in which every part of the original has been translated, whereas in a partial translation parts of the original have been left untranslated, as, for instance, in certain literary translations where foreign words are interspersed in order to preserve the "foreign touch" of the material.

Catford's term "total translation" refers to what is commonly understood by translation, i.e. translation on all levels of language: the phonological and graphological levels as well as the levels of grammar and lexis. Consequently, restricted translation is a type of translation performed either at the phonological or graphological levels, or at only one of the levels of grammar and lexis. An example of phonological translation is the adoption of foreign accents or regional accents by actors and mimics, and an instance of graphological translation is the rendering in Latin characters of the original Russian graphic image СПУТНИК as CHYTHNK, in contrast to the corresponding transliteration SPUTNIK.

Finally, a rank-bound translation is one in which translation equivalence is established only at one rank, or a few ranks, low on the rank scale of the hierarchy of grammatical units, i.e. only at the morpheme or word ranks, but not at such high-rank units as the group, clause, or sentence. What is popularly called word-by-word translation or literal translation, is an example of translation that is rank-bound at word-rank. In unbounded translation, on the other hand, equivalences cut right across all grammatical ranks, but generally tend to be at higher ranks, i.e. the sentence or even larger units. So-called free translation is roughly the same as Catford's unbounded translation.

3. Shortly after the second world war, the idea of using an electronic computer for mechanizing translation opened up a whole new field of translation: mechanical or machine translation. Thus we may use the nature of the translator as a criterion for distinguishing <u>human translation</u> from <u>machine translation</u>. The basic difference between human translation and machine translation derives from the fact that machines are "intelligent idiots" who can neither think nor understand, but can only carry out formalized logical operations. The processing of the content of a given text must therefore be conducted exclusively on the basis of the formal structure of the text. Yehoshua Bar-Hillel writes that it is this characteristic of machine translation which presents the greatest challenge to structural linguists, "in that their thesis that language can be exhaustively described in non-referential terms undergoes here an experimentum crucis" (1953: 217).

While a human translator can and does proceed from his semantic competence which "enables him to obtain the meaning of new sentences--sentences he has never previously heard or spoken," (Katz, 1967: 127), the machine has to make use of formal signals alone:

> Beim Humanübersetzen basieren die Vorgänge in der Translation auf der Ausnutzung des Informationsgehaltes, der an eine bestimmte Form gebunden ist; beim Maschinenübersetzen hingegen auf der Ausnutzung der Form, die Träger eines bestimmten Informationsgehaltes ist. (Kade, 1968: 41)

4. Another way of distinguishing different kinds of translation is according to the nature of the text. Thus Otto Kade (1968: 44-9) differentiates between pragmatic and literary translation, which he considers to be qualitatively different. In pragmatic translation, the elements of the expression plane have an exclusively communicative function. The function of form is solely to express meaning: "Die Funktion der Form erschöpft sich im Dienst am Inhalt." (Kade, 1968: 47) In pragmatic translation, therefore, even radical departure from the formal structure of the source language text is permissible, and often desirable, to make the content unambiguously clear.

In literary translation, on the other hand, the expression elements, apart from fulfilling a communicative function, are also part of the content. In other words, the medium is an essential element of the message. Since the formal structure acquires an autonomous value, it cannot be sacrificed without a skewing of the meaning. The two constraints of form and meaning have to be taken into consideration.

There is, of course, no rigid division between pragmatic and literary translation. Texts of a religious nature, for instance, may

be both pragmatic and literary. Thus Nida and Taber write, with reference to Bible translating:

> Meaning must be given priority, for it is the content of the message which is of prime importance in Bible translation. (Nida and Taber, 1969: 13)

But they also acknowledge the significance of the formal features of the text.

5. A distinction between various kinds of translation may also be made according to the purpose of the translation. The same textual material may be translated differently if approached with different aims. Thus Joseph B. Casagrande (1954) establishes four major aims and, with them, four major kinds of translation: pragmatic, aesthetic-poetic, linguistic, and ethnographic. His notions of pragmatic and aesthetic-poetic translation are comparable to Kade's pragmatic and literary translation. However, since the ends of translation are independent of the genre of the original text, it does not necessarily follow that poetry and literary texts call for an aesthetic-poetic translation. Thus, while scientific and technical treatises as well as official documents and communiqués are inherently pragmatic, literary texts may also be pragmatically translated.

The purpose of ethnographic translation is to explicate the cultural context of the message in the source language. The fine differences between terms for elements that are analogous in two different cultures are illuminated and specified in ethnographic translation; other kinds of translation would often simply supply "faux amis", i.e. supposedly equivalent terms. Finding meaning equivalents

as exact as possible, with no consideration of formal equivalence, is a characteristic of ethnographic translation.

In linguistic translation, the focus of attention is on grammatical form, its purpose is to "identify, and assign equivalent meanings to, the constituent morphemes of the source language." (Casagrande, 1954: 337) Morphemes, words, phrases, and larger units are rendered sequentially in their closest formal equivalents, the original structure being thus preserved. The resulting text is a kind of "half-translation", or what is often called interlinear translation. With its preservation of structural or grammatical form, it is the extreme opposite to pragmatic translation, which latter focusses on the preservation of the content of the text.

Despite all the differences in aims, however, Casagrande expressly emphasizes a basic similarity:

> There is a common desire to achieve an accurate translation...Aesthetic-poetic, ethnographic, and linguistic translations are in a sense all embroideries upon this essentially pragmatic goal. (Casagrande, 1954: 338)

There may be a sense, then, in which we are justified in looking at translation in general. But we may be more specific: in the following discussion of the impossibilities and possibilities of translation, the simple term translation means human, pragmatic, interlingual translation; and, with reference to Catford's scheme, full, total, and unbounded translation. Other kinds of translation are explicitly marked as such.

## CHAPTER IV

## TRANSLATABILITY AND MEANING I

Despite the obvious fact that, for centuries, translators have produced translations, one of the most debated points in the literature on translation is the question whether translation is possible at all. From a philosophical point of view, there have been staunch supporters of two extreme positions. On the one hand, there is the idea that translation is a hopelessly unsuccessful undertaking. Thus the Spanish existentialist philosopher and humanist José Ortega y Gasset calls translation "un ejercicio utópico" (1960: 36), which, just as all other human endeavours, is condemned to imperfection and futility. On the other hand, the proponents of a Marxist epistemology maintain that since everything can be objectively known and expressed in any natural language, everything can also be translated into any natural language. Otto Kade, a champion of the Marxist theory of translation, writes: "Vom Philosophischen her neigen wir-gestützt auf den dialektischen Materialismus-zu einer prinzipiellen Bejahung der Übersetzbarkeit" (1968: 19).

In the following, we shall look into the controversy of untranslatability versus translatability from a linguistic point of view. Since translation is primarily a semantic operation (see above, pp. 16-7), we shall first look into the problem of meaning.

It is customary to distinguish between semantic, referential, or lexical meaning on the one hand, and grammatical or structural meaning on the other hand. According to John Lyons (1969: 435), grammatical meaning comprises (1) the meaning of grammatical items, as the parts of speech and grammatical categories, (2) the meaning of grammatical functions such as "subject of", (3) the meaning of different sentence-types. In translation, grammatical meaning cannot be held constant, because the form of a linguistic unit is necessarily changed in the translational process. As Catford states:

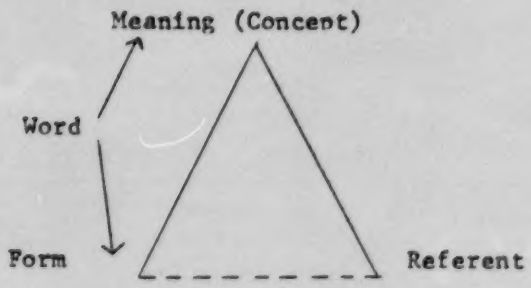
> Translation equivalence is independent of formal correspondence: equivalence may be observed between categories and items which fall into completely different places in the grammatical hierarchies of the two languages.
> (Catford, 1966: 292)

Nouns may be rendered by verbs and vice versa; words may map into phrases, and phrases into sentences; the subject of a sentence in the source language may become the object of a sentence in the target language, and so on. What is grammatical meaning in one language may become lexical or semantic meaning in another language. Translation as a semantic operation implies a symbolic function, namely the relation between linguistic units and the non-linguistic, outside world of objects, events, abstracts and relations, and is essentially concerned with semantic meanings--which are largely independent of formal grammatical structure. In the following discussion we shall therefore consider meaning in terms of semantic meaning unless otherwise specified. (Semantic meaning does not only reside in words but also in other linguistic units which, in translation, stand in a relationship of substitution to each other.)

We shall first examine the traditional approach to meaning; then we shall consider several approaches made by twentieth century structuralist linguists, in order to see whether--as has been claimed--these theories render translation theoretically impossible.

A. Traditional Views

The traditional approach to meaning is founded on the word as the basic unit. The word is conceived to have a dual character possessing a certain form and a meaning. The form is viewed as the "vehicle" of meaning, with the meaning being defined in terms of "things", i.e. classes of objects, or properties, and conditions of the surrounding universe including all types of abstract relations, general structure of the world, and so on. The relationship between words and "things" is the relationship of naming. To use more technical terms: words refer to things, the latter are their referents, the relationship is one of reference. The meaning of a word is the concept of the referent which is present in the speaker-hearer's mind because of an association between the form of the word and its referent. This traditional view of meaning can be represented in the so-called semiotic triangle :




(Lyons, 1969: 404)

The relationship between form and referent indicated by a dotted line is an indirect one: form and referent are only related to each other through the conceptual meanings in the minds of the speaker-hearer.

Taken together, the traditional approach to meaning is closely tied to the surrounding universe and its interpretation in the minds of the language users. With this conception there is no question of untranslatability. In principle, translation is always possible: it is but a matter of attaching different labels (forms) to the same pre-existing referents, which--given the assumption of universal reason--are interpreted alike. Georges Mounin sums up the traditional view of meaning and its consequences for translatability:

> Le monde étant considéré comme un grand magasin d'objets, matériels ou spirituels, bien séparés, chaque langue en ferait l'inventaire avec un étiquetage propre, une numérotation particulière: mais on pourrait toujours passer sans erreur d'un inventaire à l'autre, puisque...chaque objet n'aurait qu'une étiquette, et chaque numéro ne désignerait qu'un article dans le même magasin donné d'avance à tous les faiseurs d'inventaire. (Mounin, 1963: 22)

From this point of view, translation is thus a rather simple operation establishing a relation between two forms and a meaning they share. As W. Haas has pointed out:

> Translation is supposed to be possible on account of a twofold relation of an entity, called "meaning": two expressions are viewed as "vehicles" of the same meaning. (Haas, 1962: 208)

The customary practice of having long lists of presumably perfectly equivalent words in two languages at the back of traditional

foreign language teaching material may be taken as an indication of the belief in absolute translatability. The translator, in this scheme, is simply supposed to effect a "migration of meanings".

B. Structuralist Views

1. This traditional view of meaning has been challenged by modern structural linguistics. Its pioneer, the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1949: 97) attacks the traditional conception of the dictionary of a language being simply a kind of nomenclature, a list of terms established through a process of naming the whole material and intellectual inventory of the universe. Saussure criticizes this idea of a relationship between pre-existing extralinguistic referents and linguistic units as being simplistic. He goes on to show that there are no universal laws for "naming" things, but that the meaning attached to any linguistic form is of a completely arbitrary nature. While in French there is one word mouton for both the animal and its meat, there are two words sheep and mutton in English. Even if there are some rough correspondences between certain words in different languages, they do never exactly correspond: different language communities do not segment reality in a uniform way. The classification of material and spiritual entities can take place on many different levels which renders a one-to-one correspondence between vocabulary items of different languages impossible. This non-correspondence proves that words cannot be regarded as isolated units in a nomenclature, but that they must be part of a structured whole, the system of langue.

According to Saussure, the linguistic sign which is composed of two arbitrarily connected parts, the sound or signifier (signifiant) and the signified concept (signifié), has a specific meaning only in parole, the actual use of language. Within the underlying system of langue, the sign has many potential meanings or, in Saussure's terms, it has value (valeur). This value is completely determined within the system of langue, i.e. it is delimited by the network of relationships within the system, by the presence of synonyms of near-synonyms which put a limit to its potential functions. Thus, instead of deriving an "absolute" meaning of words from extralinguistic a priori referents, Saussure defines meaning "relatively" or negatively, and with reference to a particular language system:

> Quand on dit (que des valeurs) correspondent à des concepts, on sous-entend que ceux-ci sont purement différentiels, définis non pas positivement par leur contenu, mais négativement par leurs rapports avec les autres termes du système. Leur plus exacte caractéristique est d'être ce que les autres ne sont pas.
> (Saussure, 1949: 162)

Given this conception of system-meaning or value, it is obvious that two signs in two different systems can never have the same meaning: the whole gamut of potential functions of lexical items in different languages is never identical. From the point of view of langue, then, translation is impossible. Using V1 as value of any sign in a second language, Robert Politzer formulates a "law of untranslatability" thus:

> V1 ≠ V2 : Isolated signs without specific reference are considered from the point of view of the system and are therefore not capable of translation into another language. (Politzer, 1956: 319)

However, this cannot be taken as a verdict against translation in itself. Coming back to Saussure's example of English mutton and sheep versus French mouton, we find that the French word can assume the same "signification" as the English sheep or mutton i.e. the same meaning in parole. Thus, from the viewpoint of parole, equivalence is still possible: signs in different systems are equivalent in the sense that they can fulfill the same function in a given context. Saussure's conception of meaning thus renders only word-for-word translation impossible: signs in isolation are never translatable because the language systems differ widely due to different segmentation of the universe by different language communities.

2. The Danish linguist Louis Hjelmslev (1963) also criticizes the traditional conception of meaning. Like Saussure, he objects to defining a linguistic sign exclusively in terms of an extralinguistic referent in disregard of the language system. In Hjelmslev's view, the conception that "a sign is first and foremost a sign for something...is linguistically untenable" (1963: 47). The sign is not an expression that points to some content outside of itself, but it only comes into existence through a link between an expression and a content. Expression and content presuppose each other, there is no a priori content; Hjelmslev thus explains the fact that the languages of the world analyze the same reality arbitrarily into different content forms and substances by the assumption that there are no universal content forms and substances prior to articulation in language.

Hjelmslev does assume an underlying universal "mass of thought," an abstract, unanalyzed continuum which he calls purport. Thus the following five expressions in different languages are conceived as having a common purport:

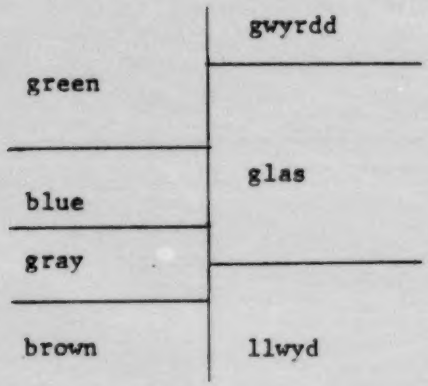
| | |
|---|---|
| Danish: | jeg véd det ikke |
| English: | I do not know |
| French: | Je ne sais pas |
| Finnish: | en tiedä |
| Eskimo: | naluvara |

(Hjelmslev, 1963: 50)

Each language, then, shapes the same purport in a different way because it lays arbitrary boundaries on the amorphous mass of thought. Hjelmslev illustrates this idea by giving the image of a handful of sand that may be shaped into various different patterns:

> Just as the same sand can be put into different molds...so also the same purport is formed or structured differently in different languages. What determines its form is solely the functions of the language... (Hjelmslev, 1963: 52)

As an example of a "zone of purport" that is structured differently in different languages, Hjelmslev lists the colour spectrum on which languages set different boundaries. A schematic confrontation between the Welsh and English colour terms clearly shows the lack of correspondence:




(Hjelmslev, 1963: 53)

English speakers refer to objects as green which Welsh speakers call either gwyrdd or glas, and Welsh speakers refer to objects as glas which an English speaker may call either green or blue, or grav. To show that this incongruence within the same zones of purport shows up everywhere, Hjelmslev lists a series of other examples in different languages, among them the differences in the zones of number and tense.

If there is no congruence between languages on the expression and content planes, translation should, nevertheless, still be possible if there is access to the underlying common denominator: purport. However, says Hjelmslev, the purport itself is "inaccessible to knowledge...and, thus, has no scientific existence apart from (its manifestation in linguistic forms)" (1963: 76).

Yet, Hjelmslev (1963: 77) is not consistent: he also states that, whereas it is the task of linguistics to describe linguistic forms, other sciences have to analyze purport. Hence, it is possible to objectively compare the contents of linguistic signs (which are the expression of a purport) with an extralinguistically verifiable purport. One may, for example, compile an exact listing of all the colour terms in all languages of the world defined in terms of light frequencies and the physiology of colour vision. Reference to scientifically describable phenomena may thus facilitate the passage from one language to another.

However, in the practice of translation, many problems still remain. How is one to translate the Welsh glas into English, or the German Holz into Danish in which it can be either skov or trae? In

most cases, of course, the context resolves the difficulties. However, in many instances in which there is but one reference to, say, the colour of eyes or dresses, etc., no disambiguation seems possible.

In pointing to the basic incongruence as regards lexical distinctions drawn by different languages, Hjelmslev has made translators aware of the fact that word-for-word translation is impossible, and that, furthermore, it may often be impossible to translate accurately a particular term if the context does not provide enough clues for disambiguation.

3. Another attack on the traditional conception of meaning was undertaken by Leonard Bloomfield (1933), the most influential American linguist of the first third of the twentieth century. In accordance with the behaviouristic school of psychology, Bloomfield set out to analyze language without taking recourse to vague notions of "thought", "concept", "image" or "idea", which he considered to be pre-scientific and "mentalistic" notions because they could not be verified objectively, i.e. without introspection. Bloomfield was therefore led to restate the traditional conception of reference in an extreme way: he defined the meaning of a linguistic form in purely referential terms as "the situation in which the speaker utters it and the response which it calls forth in the hearer" (1933: 139). Such a definition, however, based as it is on the many-faceted concept of "situation", makes an accurate statement of what exactly is the meaning of a given linguistic form virtually impossible; for the exact knowledge of the meaning of a given linguistic form would presuppose omniscience.

> In order to give a scientifically accurate definition of meaning for every form of a language, we should have to have a scientifically accurate knowledge of everything in the speakers' world.
> (Bloomfield, 1933: 139)

This assumption that it is impossible to grasp the full meaning of a linguistic form would, of course, —if taken in its extreme form—deny any possibility of translation. If meaning is inaccessible, translation, just as communication in general, would be theoretically infeasible. However, the strict theoretical position of the ultimately elusive character of meaning is modified by Bloomfield himself (1933: 145) in his postulate of the constancy and specificity of the meaning of linguistic forms without which the actual use of language in communication would not be possible. Bloomfield (1939: 140-1) points out that, in communication, there are many semantically irrelevant, "non-distinctive" features of the situation. For instance, in saying apple, the size, weight, shape, colour, odour, location, time, etc. must not necessarily be known to the communication partners. Certain "semantic" or "distinctive features", however, are shared by all those situations that prompt the utterance of apple.

Communication is also possible through a definition of meanings by way of demonstration (deictic or ostensive definition), circumlocution (linguistic definition), and even through translation (bilingual definition). Also, Bloomfield concedes that we are able to define meanings of linguistic forms quite accurately if we possess relevant scientific knowledge. The names of minerals can be defined perfectly: "the ordinary meaning of the English word salt is 'sodium-chloride (NaCl)'" (1939: 139). Likewise, the technical terminology of any science supplies

us with precise statements of meanings. It is thus often possible to know what a linguistic form "means". In all areas, therefore, in which the situations may be defined sufficiently well for communication to take place, in which the meaning is clear, translation will also be possible.

Meaning in the above sense is to be taken as "denotative meaning" or denotation, which, in Bloomfield's view, is the minimum of objective characteristics of a linguistic form that may serve as a definition valid for all speakers of a language. Words like love, truth, or hate, however, will be difficult to handle in this way because of the presence of what Bloomfield (1933: 151) calls connotations or supplementary values. Connotations defy explicit definition being similar to what Edward Sapir (1921: 40) has called the "feeling-tone" of words, personal associations which not only vary from individual to individual, but also within one individual's mind according to his changing moods and experiences. These feeling-tones or connotations--sometimes also called affective meanings--are truly elusive:

> The varieties of connotations are countless and indefinable and, as a whole, cannot be clearly distinguished from the denotative meanings. In the last analysis, every speech-form has its own connotative flavor for the entire speech-community, and this, in turn, is modified or even offset in the case of each speaker by the connotations which the form has acquired for him through his special experience. (Bloomfield, 1933: 155)

Connotations thus greatly inhibit communication, both intralingually and interlingually.

Taken together, Bloomfield's conception of meaning cannot be taken as denying the possibility of translation in every case. Translation seems definitely possible in all cases involving accurately definable terms of scientific disciplines; and, in general, denotative meanings may be rendered reasonably well. Bloomfield himself states:

> As to denotation, whatever can be said in one language, can doubtless be said in any other: the differences will concern only the structure of the forms, and their connotation. (Bloomfield, 1933: 278)

Connotations cannot be rendered correctly in translation because of their basically indefinable nature. The enormous difficulties in literary translation derive mainly from the fact that literary texts--as works of art by definition subjective and original--abound in "personal deviations".

Bloomfield's ideas may help to explain such difficulties or impossibilities of translation. If the translator despairs over the translation of literary works, he will at least know why. Popular reference to mysterious intangibles in language, to the famous flair for nuances a translator either has or has not (and is supposed to have) cannot clarify this issue sufficiently.

4. Another structural approach to meaning, the theory of the <u>semantic field</u>, particularly stresses the differences between the lexica of different languages. As opposed to the traditional view of the vocabulary of a language as a mere aggregation of independent items, this theory regards the vocabulary as being organized into <u>fields</u>. The idea of a

semantic field originated with Gunther Ipsen, a German linguist, who in 1924 first used the term in referring to the structure of conceptual spheres in order to characterize a group of words which are employed in connection with a specific area of experience.

One of the major proponents of the field theory is the German linguist Jost Trier. He defines a lexical field as a network of conceptual contents:

> Ein Wortfeld ist eine Gruppe von Wörtern, die inhaltlich einander eng benachbart sind und die sich vermöge Interdependenz ihre Leistungen gegenseitig zuweisen. (Trier, 1968: 10)

True to Saussure's principle of reciprocal delimitation, Trier conceives of the meaning of linguistic units as being determined by the presence of other linguistic units that relate to the same range of phenomena or conceptual sphere:

> ...no thing in language exists independently. Inasmuch as structuring constitutes the basic essence of language, all linguistic components are the result of structuring. The ultimate meaning of each is determined precisely and only by its relation to, and function in, the total linguistic structure.
> (Trier, quoted in Basilius, 1952: 100)

Each language structures a given sphere of experience in a unique way, lexical fields vary therefore greatly from language to language. Favourite examples of such divergent fields are the domains of colour terms, flora and fauna, weight and measures, military ranks, the terms for religious experiences, intellectual qualities, ethical and aesthetic values, and kinship relations.

Within the domain of kinship terms, for instance, the same biological facts and relationships are classified and expressed in a

great variety of ways. Speakers of Mohave in Western Arizona have two contrasting terms for the equivalent of English father: one for 'father of male referent' and another for 'father of female referent' (Winter, 1961: 70-1). Hungarian had no single term for 'brother' and 'sister' until the nineteenth century, instead there were two pairs of separate words for 'elder brother' and 'younger brother' (bátya and öcs) and 'elder sister' and 'younger sister' (néne and hug). In Malay, there is only one collective term (saudara) for 'brother' and 'sister', which does not indicate sex, and which can, at the same time, mean 'cousin' (Ullmann, 1967: 247-8). There is no single term for either 'grandfather' or 'grandmother' in Swedish: Swedish distinguishes between 'father's father' (farfar) and 'mother's father' (morfar), and between 'father's mother' (farmor)and mother's mother' (mormor).

While all these languages base their classification of kinship relations on blood relationship, there are many other languages that base theirs on complex social relationships. Thus Ontong Javanese men refer to their sisters as ave and their brothers as kainga; Ontong Javanese women refer to their brothers as ave and their sisters as kainga. Kainga is also used for the brother of a man's wife, her sisters and their husbands, as well as other persons who are in close, informal, and easy social relationship. Ave is reserved for all siblings and other persons who have a more formal, distant, or strained relationship with one another. (Lee, 1960: 138)

The illustrated differences in the segmentation of reality resulting in different semantic structures may be called in modern terminology: contrasts in codifiability (Fishman, 1960: 326), i.e.

one language may encode a certain phenomenon in a single term, another language may have several terms, a third language may have no term at all, but may express the phenomenon only in circumlocution. Thus, languages differ in the ease of expression of certain phenomena, and, as we have seen, they differ in what is obligatorily expressed. In Jakobson's words: "Languages differ essentially in what they must convey and not in what they may convey" (1966: 236). This has important implications for translation: while the existence of vastly different semantic fields does not render translation in itself impossible, word-for-word correspondence is clearly out of the question. It does not seem to be plausible that "smaller units than sentences will turn out to be uniquely translatable. It is not even clear that sentences are large enough units" (Bar-Hillel, 1964: 57). In many cases, a great deal of explanation and roundabout expression will be necessary in translating. One may argue that in such circumlocutions, nuances get invariably lost. True, but this is a stylistic matter, which does not invalidate translatability in the sense that there is

> no area of meaning encompassed by one language that cannot be encompassed by another--more awkwardly sometimes but never with such imperfections that the idea cannot be put across.
> (Bolinger, 1968: 294)

However, insuperable difficulties may crop up if an "untranslatable word" is at the same time a key word in the whole text. One such case is described by Suzanne Öhman (1959), who reports on the translation of Johan Huizinga's Homo Ludens--a study of the play-element in culture--into the German and Swedish languages. Huizinga works with an all-embracing concept of play, including such cultural manifestations

as music, theatre, and cult or religious activities. When the Swedish translation of this work was reviewed in the Swedish press, the reviewers felt that Huizinga was reading too many different things into this concept of play, or spel in Dutch. Now Swedish has as counterparts of the Dutch spel both spel and lek; according to Öhman, it is obvious that the distinction which the reviewers wanted Huizinga to make, was in fact only made in the Swedish language. She concludes that it was impossible to translate homo ludens satisfactorily into Swedish, because of the lack of congruence between Dutch spel and Swedish spel and lek, the translator being constantly forced into artificial choices between spel and lek, none of which had the same denotation and connotation as the Dutch spel. Öhman suggests that the untranslatability of this key notion accounted for the fact that the work was never popular in Sweden; as a counterexample, the German version of the work has been a great success because German Spiel has the same double meaning as Dutch spel.

We have seen that such representatives of structural linguistics as Saussure, Hjelmslev, Bloomfield and Trier have rejected the traditional conception of meaning which had led translators to believe that linguistic signs in different languages--though obviously differing on the expression plane--referred to the same "things" in the real world. Due to this assumed correspondence, translation had seemed always possible. Structural linguists leave the translator with an awareness of the arbitrariness of the conventionalized meaning of a particular form; an understanding of the importance of semantic structure, i.e.

the network of relationships within a particular language system as a "système...où tout se tient" (Meillet, 1964: ix); and a knowledge of the unlimited diversity of the semantic structures of different languages. Structural linguistics thus leaves the translator with an ultimate uncertainty as to what the "full meaning" of a particular linguistic form is.

This disquietening uncertainty still increases under the impact of the theories of the "hidden metaphysics" or worldviews that languages are said to embody. In the traditional view, language is thought to be but a tool operated by something "deeper", called thought, reason or logic, which depends on certain laws common to all mankind. Different languages are conceived to be but parallel instruments embodying and reflecting this universal reason. On this view, everything can, of course, be readily translated from one language into any other. The Whorfian views holding that any language is associated with a unique Weltanschauung imply the very opposite: language influences thought or reason. We shall deal with these ideas and their relevance for the possibilities of translation in the following section.

C. Whorfian Views

1. Humboldtian and Neo-Humboldtian Versions

In Trier's theory of the linguistic field, the emphasis is not so much on the referent, but rather on the concept. Trier(1934) believes that the lexical field made up of conceptually related terms corresponds to a conceptual field, the lexical field being only the outward manifestation

of an underlying conceptual field. The sum of all the conceptual fields in a given language makes up the Weltanschauung embodied in the language and forced by the language onto its speakers. By Weltanschauung he means the way the speakers of the language look at the world, the way they experience phenomena, and interpret them. Since the lexical fields differ from language to language, the corresponding conceptual fields and their sum total, the worldview of a language, are likewise not the same in any two languages: the speakers of each language have a unique conception of reality.

The idea of a language's conditioning its speakers into a certain worldview did not originate with Trier: it had already been proposed within the framework of German idealistic philosophy. Johann Georg Hamann has dealt with the question of the influence of language on thought; Johann Gottfried Herder has also regarded languages as embodying mental characteristics of their speakers, languages being but reflections of a certain "national mentality".[4] But it was Wilhelm von Humboldt, the nineteenth century comparative linguist and philosopher, who became the first influential propagator of the idea that every language, as an a priori framework of cognition, determines the worldview of its speakers. Humboldt looks upon language as a self-contained, creative, symbolic organization--energeia--in a speaker. Language, being an active and dynamic force, not only refers to experience, but actually defines it for the speaker because he unconsciously extrapolates from

---

[4]For a description of the historical development of the idea of language influencing worldview see Miller (1968: 14-21).

the language's implicit expectations. Language is conceived to have an "inner form", which, just as the external language structure varies widely among languages, is peculiar to each language. This spiritual structure of language corresponds to the thought processes of its users. In his main work, bearing the indicative title Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues and ihren EinfluB auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts (On the Heterogeneity of Language and Its Influence on the Intellectual Development of Mankind), Humboldt expresses this idea in the following manner:

> Die Sprache ist gleichsam die äußerliche Erscheinung des Geistes der Völker; ihre Sprache ist ihr Geist und ihr Geist ist ihre Sprache; man kann sich beide nie identisch genug denken. (Humboldt, 1960: liii)

Languages are the midway between objective reality and man's conceptualization of it; they act like coloured glasses forcing its speakers to perceive the same reality in an idiosyncratic way:

> The languages serve as media through which, and necessarily by which, the external world is perceived and thought about, the resulting different worldviews being results of different language structures. (Brown, 1967: 116)

Humboldt's ideas were reformulated in Germany by a group of linguists often referred to as neo-Humboldtians. The field-theorists Jost Trier and Walter Porzig belong to this group, but their best-known spokesman is Johann Leo Weisgerber. Weisgerber looks upon language as the intermediary world--geistige Zwischenwelt--which intervenes between man and reality, and which forces him into a specific Weltanschauung, the individual being a victim to his native tongue:

> Der einzelne formt sich seine intellektuelle Weltanschauung nicht auf Grund selbständiger Verarbeitung eigenen Erlebens, sondern im Banne der in den Begriffen der Sprache niedergelegten Erfahrungen seiner sprachlichen Vorfahren. (Weisgerber, 1964: 45)

The individual's cognitive processes, his way of perceiving and thinking about the world are completely determined by his native tongue, his Muttersprache. Weisgerber (1964: 47-8) maintains, for example, that, although the human sense of smell is well-developed, speakers of German do not rely on this sense much because there are so few terms expressing the sense of smell in German. Vision is by far the most important sense for German speakers because it has the most differentiated terminology.

For Weisgerber, then, language determines cognition and behaviour. It follows that members of different language communities not only speak differently, but also think and behave differently. Similarly, Karl Vossler, who belongs to the "idealists of Romance linguistics" (see Hall, 1964), maintains that we are all enslaved by the "inner nature" of our language, "out of which we neither can nor wish to escape" (Vossler, 1932: 197).

To bridge the gap between different languages seems to be, in the neo-Humboldtian framework, a hopeless undertaking. To translate is theoretically impossible; for how can any translator rid himself of the chains of his own worldview , how can he ever know how speakers of the language into or out of which he is to translate, interpret reality? Karl Vossler states categorically: "The inner language form

is untranslatable" (1932: 182). For the neo-Humboldtians and certain other mentalistic linguists, who interpret meaning in the traditional sense as the concept residing in the speaker-hearer's mind, translation is impossible because of the ultimate inaccessibility of that meaning. Far from being a reconstitution of the content of a text, translation becomes at best a kind of "spiritual metamorphosis". (see Gipper, 1966)

Before looking closer into the justification for the above theses and the claim of untranslatability, we shall first examine another similar approach to the problem of language and worldview. At this stage, let us only point out that the above two theses of linguistic determinism (namely that language determines thought and behaviour) and linguistic relativism (namely that each language embodies a certain worldview) have not been emprirically validated and remain hypothetical.

2. The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis

While the Humboldtian and neo-Humboldtian versions of the connection between language and thought repelled many scholars because of the missionary pathos of their presentation[5] and their sporadic ethnocentrism, a similar proposal, the so-called Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, or sometimes Sapir-Whorf-Korzybski hypothesis,[6] has been given more

---

[5]Harold Basilius (1952: 99) calls Weisgerber's diction "hieratic".

[6]Alfred Korzybski belongs to a school called "general semantics", which also stresses the conditioning influence of language on thought. (Other members of the school include S. I. Hayakawa, Anatol Rapoport, and Stuart Chase.)

serious attention in linguistic circles. Basically, the American linguists Edward Sapir (1949) and his disciple Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956) advance the same ideas. Sapir expresses their crux in the following manner:

> Human beings do not live in the objective world alone...but are very much at the mercy of the particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society...the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group...the worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same worlds with different labels attached. (Sapir, 1949: 162)

Here we have the same two hypotheses of linguistic determinism and, as its logical conclusion, linguistic relativism. However, Sapir, and especially Whorf, make at least some attempt to prove their ideas empirically. Whorf adduces a whole catalogue of impressive data illustrating the great differences between American Indian languages and what he calls Standard Average European (SAE) languages, i.e. the undifferentiated collectivity of English, French, German, Italian, etc. Like Trier and Weisgerber, Whorf also infers mental and behavioural differences from differences between languages on the level of lexis. However, he particularly emphasizes grammatical structure as the crucial feature in the connection between language and thought:

> ...segmentation of nature is an aspect of grammar ...the background linguistic system (in other words, the grammar) of each language is not merely a reproducing instrument for voicing ideas, but rather itself a shaper of ideas ... (Whorf, 1956: 240;212)

Whorf ascribes to SAE languages a special mental outlook which forces a description of events into an actor-action pattern that does not necessarily correspond to reality. The two most important form classes of SAE languages are nouns and verbs; SAE languages give its speakers a bipolar division of nature because these classes have semantic correlates, i.e. speakers of SAE are likely to think of these classes in semantic terms, nouns standing for stable substances and verbs for short-term processes and actions. This scheme of a persisting entity separable from active and passive behaviour has become fundamental for the categories of SAE thinking, from Aritotle's categories of substance and action to the antitheses of matter and force, mass and energy in modern science. However, says Whorf (1956: 215), it is not nature itself that is thus polarized. The presence of lightning, spark, eddy, etc. among nouns, and keep, adhere, persist, etc. among verbs proves the lack of correspondence between nature and language. According to Whorf, this lack of correspondence between natural and logical categories on the one hand, and grammatical categories on the other hand--as stressed by modern descriptive linguistics over against traditional grammar--corroborates the fact that it is our language that forces us to see, for instance, keep as an event because it is classed as a verb. We are thus "deluded prisoners of our language...properly a caricature of the traditional grammarian...whose cardinal sin it was to read meaning into words" (Percival, 1966: 6).

In this framework, the Hopi Indians, whose language classifies events by their duration, lightning and spark being necessarily verbs in their language, cannot share our view of reality. And because (according to Whorf) Nootka lacks the formclasses of nouns and verbs altogether, Nootka sentences not splitting into subject and predicate, the speakers of that language have a different Weltanschauung from SAE speakers, "as it were, a monistic view of nature" (1956: 215).

According to Whorf, the tense distinctions of past, present and future--self-evident for SAE speakers--do not exist in Hopi, which "may be called a timeless language" (1956: 216). In Hopi, verbs have no tenses, but there is an obligatory indication of the validity of a statement, as well as obligatory indication of the duration of an event. Hopi speakers lacking our three-tense system, which, in Whorf's view, influences all our thinking about time (witness records, diaries, calendars, time wages, annals, interest in the past, etc.), are therefore supposed to have a very different conception of time, or rather no conception of the time dimension at all. Theirs is a timeless and ahistorical outlook on life; attention to the duration and degree of certainty of an event is more important than attention to a point in time.

These examples should suffice to show how Whorf arrives at the assumption that different worldviews originate from differences of the grammatical structure of languages, an assumption that leads him to formulate what he calls "a new principle of relativity which

holds that all observers are not led by the same physical evidence to the same picture of the universe" (1956: 214).

While Whorf examines only such vastly different languages as SAE and American Indian languages, it is not difficult to list many other instances of grammatical diversity among the languages of the world. Languages differ strikingly in the grammatical categories that are obligatorily represented. For example, the category of number is not obligatory in Chinese; Fijian has a fourway number system for personal pronouns: singular, dual, paucal, multiple, and no number at all for nouns (see Hockett, 1958: 234). Gender is likewise not found in all languages, and the number of gender distinctions varies greatly in languages that have gender. The Senufo languages of Africa elevate 'size' into a subcategory of nouns; Chontal, a Mayan dialect of Southern Mexico, has, not unlike Chinese, an intricate categorization of objects that is necessary whenever objects are counted (see Bolinger, 1968: 231). Many languages have an elaborate apparatus of aspects: momentaneous, continuative, inceptive, cessative, durative, durative-inceptive, iterative, momentaneous-iterative, and so forth (see Sapir, 1921: 108).

The listing of grammatical peculiarities could be extended at great length. Now, if languages display such striking grammatical differences, and if--as Sapir and Whorf maintain--linguistic form has a truly "tyrannical hold" upon our way of thinking, one might conclude that the theoretical possibility of translation, not only from and into SAE and American Indian languages, but also from and

into many other languages, seems to be denied. If all our knowledge is mediated through our native language, it is not possible to rid ourselves of that mediating influence. Given Whorf's (and the neo-Humboldtian's) implicit mentalistic view of meaning as an image present in the speaker-hearer's mind, it is logically impossible to know any foreign language, let alone translate; for the cognitive differences between members of different languages result in different and unknowable concepts or images of the same referents in their minds. One can never know the objective intellectual content of any foreign language because this foreign language has to be learned in exactly the same way as any aspect of reality which is subject to, and shaped by, native-tongue conditioned ways of thinking.

A good example of the assumed inaccessibility of meaning through differences in worldview and, consequently, of the impossibility of translation, is given by Dorothy D. Lee, who has studied the Wintu language. She states:

> If the Wintu offers me an English word in translation for a Wintu one, I rarely have any way of knowing what exactly the word means to him. When he says that "watca" means to weep, for example, is he like me thinking of the whole kinaesthetic activity with all its emotional implications or is he merely concerned with the sound of keening as I think he is...
> (Lee, 1944: 184)

Also, since in translation grammatical form must necessarily change, the kind of grammatical meaning that Whorf imputes as being present in the language users' minds, is, of course, lost in translation. On Whorf's view, a translation being thus formally different from its original, would no longer be a translation, but a transfiguration.

Hence, we may say that "linguistic relativity is the doctrine of untranslatability in modern guise" (Feuer, 1953: 95).

But before accepting this verdict of untranslatability as final, let us critically examine the legitimacy of the thesis of linguistic relativism.

3. Criticism of Theories of Linguistic Relativism

Joshua A. Fishman, for one, has pointed to the circularity of all arguments concerning the effects of grammatical differences on worldview:

> ...the very same grammatical designata that are said to have brought about (or merely to reflect) a given Weltanschauung are also most frequently the only data to prove that such a Weltanschauung does indeed exist. (Fishman, 1960: 333)

It may thus be that the Whorfian hypothesis is based on a vicious circle; also, the claim that one may find different worldviews by looking at grammatical and lexical differences is simply a logical impossibility if one maintains at the same time that one cannot know except through the tinted glasses of one's own mother tongue:

> How the relativist has escaped his own linguistic a priori to know, for example, the details of the Hopi a priori, is incomprehensible. (Feuer, 1953: 96)

Whorf relied heavily on literal or word-for-word translation to show the differences in worldview. For instance, the Apache way of referring to the same physical event that may be called in English it is a dripping spring would be 'as water or springs whiteness moves downward.' Whorf's conclusion: "How utterly unlike our way of thinking" (1956: 241). This use--or misuse--of literal translation has been

criticized by Eric H. Lenneberg (1953). Since on Whorf's assumption translation is in principle impossible, the word-for-word rendition is useless because one does ultimately only "compare two sets of elements of one and the same psychological structure" (Lenneberg, 1953: 465), although they may be rendered in two different languages.

Due to the criticism levelled against Whorf's own procedures, various attempts have been undertaken to subject his ideas to rigorously designed empirical tests, notably by Brown and Lenneberg (1954), Brown (1957), Lenneberg and Roberts (1956), and Flavell (1958). While these studies provide some evidence for a correlation between semantic and grammatical structure on the one hand and cognition on the other hand, they cannot be taken as proving conclusively that speakers of different languages have wholly different worldviews. John B. Carroll (1963: 10) states that, at the present time, there does not exist any conclusive evidence for thinking that languages embody worldviews. Both theoretical considerations and experimental evidence, says Carroll, have led him to adopt a very limited kind of linguistic relativity hypothesis, which relates to the simple fact that languages do codify a given range of experience in different ways, and do vary widely in their semantic structures:

> Insofar as languages differ in the ways they encode objective experience, language users tend to sort out and distinguish experience differently according to the categories provided by their respective languages. (Carroll, 1963: 10)

Carroll's careful phrasing suggests that language users are not necessarily influenced in this way. We are not "victims" of our native tongue, and despite the existence of an impressive catalogue of language differences, we may conclude that all these individual differences "do not, in all probability, add up to differences in 'worldview' or Weltanschauung" (Carroll, 1963: 17).

This view, critical of Whorfian linguistic relativism, seems to be corroborated by four other considerations: (a) psycholinguistic aspects of bilingualism, (b) language change, (c) the complexity of a language community, (d) the "creativity" of language. We shall deal with these points in turn.

a. John McNamara (1970), doubting there is any evidence to justify Whorfian linguistic relativism, tries to refute it by a reductio ad absurdum.

Whorfian relativism, according to McNamara, is closely related to the compound-coordinate distinction of bilingualism in psycholinguistics.[7] Susan M. Ervin and Charles E. Osgood (1965) define compound bilinguals as those who, having learnt one language through the medium of another, or having learnt the two languages in the same context, operate with a "merged code", i.e. a single set of representational mediation processes for their two languages. Coordinate or true bilinguals are those who have acquired their two languages in

---

[7]Weinreich (1953) first introduced a distinction between coordinate, compound, and subordinate bilingualism. His subordinate bilingualism was later subsumed under compound bilingualism by Ervin and Osgood (1965).

different contexts and consequently manage to keep their two codes separate possessing for each language a distinct semantic system, i.e. a separate set of representational mediation processes.

In Ervin's and Osgood's view, a compound bilingual can never translate in a true cross-cultural sense: given his single system of representational processes, he must needs apply the same set of cultural meanings to both languages although it is really only appropriate to his dominant language. The coordinate bilingual, however, is—in theory--able to effect a true cross-cultural translation either through "generalization", i.e. encoding of the most suitable translation-equivalent possible in a situation where representational processes are most similar due to cultural convergence, or through "learning"--a method used whenever a sign in one language is so closely associated with its cultural context that generalization would be inhibited. In this learning process, the translator forms an association between the sign in language A and the meaning it would have in language B, which facilitates him to choose the most suitable term available in language B. However, in the "ideal" coordinate translator, perception of a sign in language A will directly and automatically lead to a response in language B without an intervention of a meaning process.

Now, McNamara objects to this explanation by Ervin and Osgood of the translation abilities found in coordinate bilinguals. He maintains that both communication and translation are, in fact, impossible under both compound and coordinate bilingualism, because this coordinate and compound distinction is really a Whorfian one:

> Since mediation processes in (Ervin's and Osgood's) system are caused by signs or stimuli, it is fair to say that differences between languages cause different cognitive, nonlinguistic, mediating processes. For example, French uses the word couper in connection with the cutting of hair with a scissors and also the cutting up of a joint of meat with a knife; standard English divides the function of couper between cut and carve respectively. It follows that a coordinate French-English bilingual could well have different mediating processes associated with couper and cut. (McNamara, 1970: 29)

The Whorfian bilingual, then, would have two different cognitive systems, one for each language. While he would be able to communicate with speakers of the two languages, he could hardly manage to communicate with himself because, in switching to language B, he would never be able to understand or explain what he had just communicated in language A—a patent reduction to absurdity.

Having thus unmasked any strong version of Whorfian relativism as being unreasonable (and ridiculous) in the case of bilinguals, McNamara points out that one should not forget that linguistic processes may only be a minor part of the cognitive functioning associated with the production and interpretation of speech. He also reminds us that any speaker is really much more dynamic in his manipulation of one or two languages than Whorf or the constructors of such "conceptual artifacts" as the compound-coordinate distinction had envisaged. This dynamism is also the true reason for the fact that the bilingual and the translator do not "end up in any of the impasses to which Whorfian theorizing...seem(s) inevitably to lead" (McNamara, 1970: 32).

b. Languages change constantly; so does our experience and conception of the world. But the two do not change at the same pace or in direct parallel. Our language is full of fossils or anachronisms. When we say today, speaking of the sun He rises in the east, we are not really imagining that some entity, of male sex, does something at a particular corner of space (see Ortega y Gasset, 1960: 60-73). There may have been a time when people imagined just that, but today this is very unlikely. At any particular time, much of our language is conventionalized and automatic. The categories of grammar may well be purely formal, semantically empty devices. It is thus doubtful whether one can draw conclusions from linguistic forms to a metaphysical worldview vigorously present in language users. That this semantic interpretation may have vanished completely in time should not be forgotten:

> If grammar itself was once founded on an unconscious metaphysics, this linkage is now so vestigial as to have no appreciable bearing on the structure of philosophic ideas. (Feuer, 1953: 87)

The same holds true for lexical items. Hockett (1954b: 111) gives a good example of a "lexical fossil" in Chinese. The Chinese word hwŏchē, equivalent to the English 'railroad train', is composed of hwŏ glossed as 'fire' and chē glossed as 'car, cart, wheeled vehicle'. While the formal structure of hwŏchē may be described as consisting of the components hwŏ and chē, we do not have to assume that speakers of Chinese give the word a correlated semantic interpretation, i.e. 'fire-spitting locomotive', when uttering or hearing the word. It simply represents 'train' for them. In corroboration, Hockett

mentions the fact that an electric train is called dyànlì-hwǒchē in Chinese, with dyànlì being equivalent to 'electric power'. The fire-spitting vehicle would be totally incongruent in this case. The fact that languages change more slowly than our experience of the world seems therefore to confirm the absence of a direct correlation between language and worldview.

c. As Roger Brown (1958: 255-8) has pointed out, there may be precariously little justification in speaking of any complex language community's worldview as though it were a monolithic whole; within the language community, contrasts in both codifiability and grammatical structure may be just as great. For example, although the absence of a differentiated terminology for different kinds of snow may make the relevant categories of 'snow' generally less available to English speaking persons, there do exist groups within the English speaking community, e.g. skiers, who have a highly differentiated vocabulary. Since many such examples of highly specialized subcommunities may be cited (cattle-breeders know and name many kinds of cattle, experts on kinship relations have correspondingly elaborate vocabularies, etc.), it is probably true that most of the "linguistic oddities turned up by Whorf and others can be found in some segment of our complex society" (Brown, 1958: 255). This also holds true of grammatical structure. Thus the validity mode of the Wintu verb has a direct parallel in the kind of language used by scholars in professional publications; although, of course, in the latter case the concern with evidence is not reflected in the method of conjugating verbs.

Habitual modes of thought of a whole linguistic community may well turn out to be phantasmagoric concepts because in any complex community a subsection may be found "to match whatever strange cognitive modes the ethnolinguist may turn up" (Brown, 1958: 258).

d. Hans Hörmann mentions as one of the main objections against Whorf's investigations that they are "linguistically atomistic" (1971: 323). Whorf's thesis is really more a thesis of the relativity of individual grammatical and lexical features than of language as a whole. Although, for example, the grammatical categories may vary greatly between any two languages, this does not mean that the two languages cannot express any given idea comparably well within the totality of the language system.

Robert E. Longacre (1956) points to the astonishing suppleness in language when it comes to expressing the totality of human experience. Vocabulary items, he says, are shaped and reshaped in any particular context so that the differences in the semantic structures of languages can also always be offset:

> The fineness and adequacy of the items-in-particular-contexts as a descriptive calculus is such that there is probably a sense in which divergencies in the vocabulary grids are ultimately irrelevant.
> (Longacre, 1956: 302)

Longacre also points out that the original class notions, for instance, of nouns as "thing words", are equally shaped by the context. Words like <u>stone</u> and <u>spark</u>, <u>jump</u> and <u>dwell</u> are really perceived to be quite different because of the context in which they habitually occur. Thus, even if we believe in semantic correlates of form-classes, these

are by no means fixed forever; nouns may well approach the sort of meaning involved in the class notion of verbs, and vice versa. We may conclude that

> ...language is not utterly at the mercy of its own distinctions and categories, but has within itself resources for outstripping and transcending those categories. (Longacre, 1956: 304)

On Longacre's reasoning, then, languages are not really that different from the viewpoint of the whole system and its potential and actual uses. In a similar vein, Bolinger (1968: 256) points to the fact that languages are much more pluralistic than a mere catalogue of their categories would suggest. The differences between languages are not so much in kind as in the degree of explicitness and emphasis. What one language has built into the layers of its structure, another language expresses only very informally and sporadically, but all languages have the resources to express any experience in a comparable manner.

Ronald W. Langacker does admit that our thinking is to a certain degree conditioned by the linguistic organization of experience because concepts coded in a single term are more readily available than concepts for which no single term is available; but, he adds, due to the creativity of the individual language user, language can never have a powerful influence on its users' thoughts:

> We are perfectly capable of forming and mentally manipulating concepts for which no word is available. We can make up imaginary entities at will, and if we so choose, proceed to name them. For example, imagine a unicorn with a flower growing out of each nostril. (Langacker, 1967: 40)

Thus, put in proper perspective, linguistic relativity, though affecting some of our cognitive behaviour, is but a minor and counteractable factor. How well linguistic relativity can be counteracted is demonstrated by the fact that different worldviews or philosophical positions have been expressed in the same language, and the same philosophical position has been expounded in very different languages: Descartes, Comte, and Bergson had the same grammatical structure at their disposal, and Aristotelian metaphysics has been developed by Arabic and Hebrew thinkers an well as by medieval Christian philosophers (see Feuer, 1953 and Black, 1959). The precariousness of stating a dependence of worldview on language is illustrated by Stuart Chase's (1953: 104-6) prognosis that Marxism could never take roots in China because the language barriers against Marxism would be too difficult to overcome.

We have seen that many linguists, philosophers, and psychologists now feel a strong version of linguistic relativism is untenable. There is always an escape from the trap of one's language--through language itself. The differences in codifiability do not amount to impenetrable differences in worldview. It is theoretically possible for the translator to know the semantic and grammatical system of a foreign language. Translation, in principle, is not impossible.

CHAPTER V

TRANSLATABILITY AND MEANING II

A. Extralinguistic Context

In saying that the differences between languages do not entail different worldviews, we do not mean, however, that speakers of different languages may not look at the same reality in a different way. Yet, such differences are most likely a result of differences in historical and social background--of differences in culture rather than of linguistic variation. The culture in which a language is embedded is of great importance for translatability because the vocabulary of a language--without necessarily indicating a people's concepts of reality--does reflect a people's way of life:

> ...the lexical distinctions drawn by each language tend to reflect the culturally important features of objects, institutions, and activities in the society in which the language operates. (Lyons, 1969: 432)

It is in this sense that we can speak of linguistic-cultural relativity, which means that the vocabularies of different languages are structured in divergent ways because they embody particular experiences, interests, values, and attitudes. Thus, knowledge of the culture of which a language is a part is indispensable for translation. It is well known to all experienced translators that knowledge of the source and target languages is not sufficient to make translation possible. Linguistic units can never be fully understood in isolation from the particular cultural phenomena for which they are symbols. Hockett

(1954b: 112) gives an example of taking the cultural context into account: the Chinese word chéng equivalent to English 'city, city wall' cannot possibly be understood in terms of Western culture, but the range of meaning of the word becomes quite clear if we know the relevant features of Chinese culture, i.e. that all Chinese cities (except Shanghai) are enclosed in square walls.

Translation of such key words as freedom, democracy, equality from and into languages of Communist and Capitalist Europe is another instance of the relevance of a knowledge of the cultural context, these terms being used in the context of very different political and social systems (see Robins, 1964: 30). It is necessary to know the relevant cultural features to which these fundamental words are applied; only then is translation in the sense of reconstitution--not transfiguration --of meaning ultimately possible. Since the system of values, beliefs, experiences of a people determines the whole freight of meaning carried by language, and since translation is supposed to be a reconstitution of that meaning, one may be inclined to agree with Casagrande who proclaimed: "In effect, one does not translate languages, one translates cultures" (1954: 338).

We may, therefore, say that translation is possible through a knowledge of the application of a linguistic unit in the cultural context. The term application has been suggested by John Lyons (1969: 434), who thinks that the range of meaning of any lexical item is to be understood in terms of three components: sense, reference, and application. Sense is defined in terms of relationships that hold between vocabulary

items, and reference (cf. p.25 above) as relating the lexical item to objects and properties outside of language. Application refers to the relation holding between an expression and the cultural situation in which it is used. For instance, the two terms, English sin and French péché may be understood to have the same application. In establishing equivalences between languages, the notion of application is thus very important; if both sense and reference differ, it is the common denominator of application in a cultural context which makes translation possible. While potential differences in the worldviews of speakers of different languages resulting in different concepts in their minds cannot be objectively known to the translator, it is the application of a linguistic unit in a particular cultural situation that can be made accessible to him.

Even if the cultural distance is great, translation is always possible through ethnographic knowledge. On the basis of this knowledge, the translator can solve all practical problems by coining a new term, or resorting to lexical borrowing or loan translation accompanied by explanatory notes and commentaries. Such notoriously untranslatable words as German Weltschmerz, Weltanschauung or English fair-play and gentleman, which fit into a particular cultural setting, have all taken this course. Thus, translation may be considered to be a dynamic process, a never ending sequence of "languages in contact", as Mounin (1963) had proposed (see above, p.14). Not only is the degree of translatability--the ease and convenience of translation--proportionate to the similarity between two cultures, but also, the more is known

about a culture, the greater the degree of translatability. Objective knowledge of the cultural context, in facilitating access to the application of linguistic units, thus makes translation possible. Or, stated negatively, untranslatability only occurs if such a knowledge is absent: "La traduisibilité ne trouve ses limites que là où commence l'ignorance des choses..." (Sõll, 1971: 26). Such cultural knowledge is, of course, outside the realm of linguistics proper; it is the subject matter of ethnography. However, as Nida (1945: 207) has pointed out, since the ethnolinguist is best able to describe and define the cultural items and situations which make up part of the meaning of lexical items, the ethnological approach may serve as a useful contribution to the problem of meaning.

The importance of considering language within the broader context of culture--of prime relevance for translation--has been emphasized by all those who, instead of stressing the psychological aspects of language, the connection between language and thought--have favoured a sociological approach of language in use.

Thus, Bronislaw Malinowski, an ethnographer who has studied the life and language of the Trobriand islanders, states that "the main function of language is not to express thought, not to duplicate mental processes, but rather to play an active part in human behaviour" (1935: 7). Malinowski (1935: 58-67) attacks the idea that native terminology reflects a certain mental make-up. Trobriand terminology, he says, is purely determined by the actual experiences and needs of the people. Malinowski holds that the meaning of lexical items and utterances is best defined in terms of what he calls "the context of the situation",

i.e. all the relevant features of the physical and cultural environment. Such a conception of meaning has important consequences for the possibilities of translation. In fact, Malinowski was led to formulate his concept of the "context of the situation", through attempts to translate Trobriand words and utterances into English. Translation, he found, is only possible if it is based on:

> ...a unification of cultural context... Translation then becomes rather the placing of linguistic symbols against the cultural background of a society than the rendering of words by their equivalents in another language. (Malinowski, 1935: 14;18)

Malinowski influenced the British linguist John Rupert Firth (1957) who further developed the notion of the context of the situation as a means of explaining the working of language in society. In regarding language as part of the social process, as "language events", Firth also refuses to look upon meaning as some mysterious mental or psychological relation. Rather he defines the meaning of a linguistic unit in terms of its use and function in the context of a certain situation.

The context of the situation, which is for Firth "the central concept of the whole of semantics" (1957: 27), relates the following categories to each other: (1) the relevant features of human participants--their verbal and non-verbal actions, (2) the relevant objects, and (3) the effect of the verbal action (Firth, 1957: 182). Such a conception of meaning is of great relevance to translation. As compared to intersubjectively non-verifiable images on the language users' minds, "the situational matrix", says Firth, "is the more

manageable one and more easily related to problems of translation" (1968: 91). Firth's approach to meaning with its reliance on the features of a situation is similar to Bloomfield's; however, Firth stresses the social and cultural nature of the context of a situation over against the individual's situational response, which Bloomfield has particularly emphasized. Of course, it is both theoretically and practically impossible to describe all the relevant features of the situation; however, Bloomfield's "distinctive features" of a situation (see above, p. 33) are sufficient for making the meaning of a linguistic unit accessible.

Situation is, thus, the most important notion in translation. Catford writes that translation-equivalence clearly depends on the condition that source and target language items be "relatable to the same features of the situation" (1966: 297). Similarly, Mounin states:

> La commune mesure de toute langue en toute langue, et la seule certaine--le seul invariant--c'est la <u>situation</u> à laquelle se réfèrent le message en langue-source et le message en langue-cible. (Mounin, 1963: 263)

Language is basically a social instrument; thus, through reference to a situation, certain features of which act as a common denominator that can be known to speaker and hearer, communication is possible. Similarly, translation, as a social-communicative phenomenon, is ultimately possible through

> ...analyzing common situations and...identifying those situations whose distinctive and unfamiliar features are peculiar to one language so that they can be interpreted and explained. Every time communication is possible between speakers of the same language, it is also possible between speakers of different languages, and for the same fundamental reasons. (Despatie, 1967: 55)

B. Universals of Language

Structural linguistics rejects the notion that there exist certain a priori categories and relationships; it insists that each language be analyzed and described separately in its own terms. Thus, the differences between languages are particularly emphasized, similarities are neglected, and any notion of "universality" in language is regarded with suspicion because the latter has unpleasant connotations of metaphysical speculations of a prescientific linguistic past. If statements about common traits of languages are made at all, they are usually held in a very general form, concerning, for instance, those overall qualities of language (human, by definition) that set it off from the communication systems of animals (see Hockett, 1963: 8-13).

With this, interest in universals of language, i.e. features that all (or most) languages share, has been revived. The 1961 conference on language universals held at Dobbs Ferry, New York[8] has shown that American linguists are again prepared to consider whether beneath the great diversity of languages there is an underlying uniformity. The time appears to have come for making generalizations on the basis of the enormous mass of empirical data that structural linguists have gathered. This return to the study of universals is, in principle, different from the earlier attempts at postulating universals on the basis of universal human reason and normative logic; present research on universals follows Bloomfield's dictum that "the only useful generalizations about language are inductive generalizations" (1933: 20), which

---

[8] For a report of the conference, see Greenberg (1963a).

means that universals are now meant to be discovered and not invented.

The question of language universals has, of course, special relevance for translation: if a sufficient number, and the right kind, of language universals did exist, if--despite their great differences--the languages of the world could "actually be approached as manifold variations of one world-wide theme--human language" (Jakobson, 1963: 264), then the possibility of translation, at least in the areas of universality, would clearly be indicated. Also, of course, an indication of the degree of translatability would be given. Let us, therefore, look more closely into proposals of the existence and nature of such language universals. We shall first investigate proposals made on account of empirical data, i.e. through comparison of languages; secondly, we shall look into proposals made within the theoretical framework of a particular linguistic school.

1. One may, conventionally, distinguish between phonological, grammatical, and semantic universals. We shall restrict our attention to grammatical and semantic universals because of their immediate relevance to our problem of translatability.

a. Grammatical Universals

Apart from stating that all languages have a grammatical system with hierarchical patterning of two basic orders, morphology and syntax, Hockett (1963) proposes that all languages have the following three special elements: (1) deictic elements (articles, pronouns, demonstratives; among these the first and second person singular pronouns are present in all languages); (2) relational elements or markers (conjunc-

tions, prepositions, and the like, which have no denotative meaning in themselves); (3) proper names.

Hockett (1963) also suggests that all languages differentiate between two major form classes: nouns and verbs. The universality of the noun-verb opposition is the most debated one. While Sapir already suggests that "no language wholly fails to distinguish noun and verb, though in particular cases the nature of the distinction may be an elusive one" (1921: 119), Whorf--as we have seen above (p. 47)--maintains Nootka has no nouns and verbs. Hockett also refers to Nootka as a possible exception; however, he states that it may well be that even Nootka has "something very much like the noun-verb contrast...at the level of whole inflected words" (1963: 40). Jakobson (1963: 265) also restates Sapir's assumption of a universal noun-verb differentiation. Lyons (1966), on the other hand, proposes that the primary categorization of noun is the only one that can be regarded as universal. Verbs --like adjectives and adverbs--are defined for particular languages according to their ways of combining with the universal nouns.

Hockett (1963) further suggests all languages use a bipartite clause type featuring something about which something is said--a topic --and something said about this topic--a comment. Also, all languages make a distinction between one-referent and two-referent predicates, i.e. verbs require either one nominal (they are transitive) or two nominals (they are intransitive).

Other grammatical universals that have been proposed include the following.[9] In all languages the number of nouns is considerably

---

[9]For a summary of these proposals see Bolinger (1968: 18).

larger than the number of verbs; therefore, most nouns can be translated into a noun in another language. All languages have devices for nominalization; all languages can make adjectival phrases out of other kinds of phrases, (e.g. "the man went→ the man who went"); all languages can turn declarative sentences into interrogatives, negatives, and commands.

Joseph H. Greenberg (1963b) approaches the question of grammatical universals by setting up a so-called "basic-order typology" which involves basic factors of word order, and which is based on three sets of criteria: (1) existence of prepositions against postpositions; (2) relative order of subject, verb, object in declarative sentences with nominal subject and object; (3) position of qualifying adjectives in relation to the noun.

On the basis of data on a thirty-language sample and this typology, Greenberg proposes forty-five universals, for example (by number):

> 14. In conditional statements, the conditional clause precedes the conclusion as the normal order in all languages.
> 36. If a language has the category of gender, it always has the category of number.
> (Greenberg, 1963b: 111;112)

Universal 36 is a good example of a "non-universal universal", or what Greenberg calls an "implicational universal" following the form "given x in a particular language, we always find y" (1963b: 73).

In another study, which he styles "speculative" and "exploratory", Greenberg (1966) proposes that the concept of corresponding marked

and unmarked categories be considered a universal. The marked category is one that indicates the presence of a property A, the unmarked one being mainly used to indicate the absence of A. For example, in English man 'masculine' is the unmarked category while woman expresses the presence of the marked category 'feminine', man having two meanings, absence of'feminine' and 'human being'. Greenberg states that this universal points to the

> ... pervasive nature in human thinking of this tendency to take one of the members of an oppositional category as unmarked so that it represents either the entire category or par excellence the opposite member to the marked category... (Greenberg, 1966: 25)

This principle is illuminated by the fact that, in many languages, the tribal name coincides with the term for 'human being'.

While the above list of universal grammatical features may certainly be based on empirical evidence, we should not forget that all the universals are but proposals. Hockett's cautious words place our discussion in proper perspective:

> Although we tend to find these patterns in language after language, it is entirely possible that we find them, because we expect them, and that we expect them, because of some deep-seated properties of the languages most familiar to us. For some languages, some scheme that is far less obvious to us, might actually fit the facts better. (Hockett, 1963: 23)

This skepticism should be kept in mind with respect to all the mentioned generalizations. Nevertheless, despite the general uncertainty about universals and the lack of agreement on specific universals, the very fact that so many common grammatical features are proposed by various linguists, strongly suggests the existence of some

stock of grammatical universals. Languages may well be cut from the same pattern.

The degree of translatability is, of course, greatly increased because of the mentioned similarities. Also, Whorfian arguments against translatability (see above, p. 49) based as they are on the alleged differences in the semantic interpretation of linguistic units resulting from differences in the inventory of grammatical categories, form classes, etc., decidedly lose further ground.

b. Semantic Universals

"The latent content of all languages is the same--the intuitive science of experience" (Sapir, 1921: 218). Indeed, the two obvious facts that all languages are spoken by human beings who qua human beings are alike, and that these human beings live on the same planet, do point to a considerable degree of common experience, which should and, in fact, is reflected in the vocabulary of all languages. Thus, the physiological universals of food, drink, excretion, breathing, sleep, parts of the body, thought, emotion, dreams, sex, birth, youth, maturity, old age, death are certainly to be found in the lexicon of all languages (Aginsky and Aginsky, 1948). Equally, the cosmological universals of sky and water and earth, cloud, moon and sun, wind, rain, time, distances, cycle of seasons, and so on, do provide a stock of common referents notwithstanding, of course, the possibility of non-equivalent symbolization in the different languages.

Despite all the differences among various cultures, one may also identify certain cultural universals--major themes that can be found in

all the cultures of the world, e.g. religion, education, art, basic technologies, social institutions, and, of course, language itself.

Apart from these fundamental similarities, there are today, with the facilities of modern technology, ever increasing points of contact between cultures. This phenomenon of a general convergence of cultures implies a commonality of reference amongst them. For instance, the points of contact between the "Standard Average European" languages and cultures are already so great that "a considerable body of common culture in Europe is reflected in the large corpus of common vocabulary in all European languages " (Weinreich, 1963: 57).

Similarly, there is a particular segment of culture that is responsible for an increasingly large "universal vocabulary": modern science. A study on the internationality in scientific nomenclature (Moon and Spencer,1946) reveals the deliberate attempts at unifying terminology by selecting a few basic stems from the Greek lexicon and forming new words through affixation of a limited number of standardized suffixes. Thus, in the area of the natural and social sciences there does already exist a sizeable body of what C. Rabin (1958: 144) calls translation stock, i.e. a special semantic subsystem within the main system of the lexicon of a given language that shares references with its counterparts in most other languages.

But it is safe to say that, given the increasing international contacts, which have already broken down all cultural isolation, such common translation stock will spread over many other areas of human

experience so that the possibility of translation is guaranteed.

2. From a different angle, the concern with language universals has recently derived great impetus: the transformational-generative grammarians revived interest in a universal or general grammar. Thus, Noam Chomsky, the central figure in American transformational-generative grammar, writes in his first major work Syntactic Structures (1957): "We are interested not only in particular languages, but also in the general nature of language" (1957: 14). As opposed to Hockett's and Greenberg's attempts to "discover" individual universal features based on empirical data and extrapolation, Chomsky and his collaborators hypothesize linguistic universality as the basis for the general framework of their theory:

> ...the main task of linguistic theory must be to develop an account of linguistic universals... The study of linguistic universals is the study of the properties of any generative grammar for a natural language. (Chomsky, 1965: 27-8)

Chomsky places himself in a long "universalist" tradition of viewing language as being innately specified in each man, which means that language universals are equated with those features of language which are part of man's genetic endowment. Just as the medieval speculative grammarians and the Renaissance Port Royal grammarians postulated that there was only one grammar--the grammar of the human mind, which is fundamentally the same for all human beings--so Chomsky assumes that, below their bewilderingly different "surface structures" (i.e. the actual, concrete organization of the physical signals into units of various

complexity, size, and arrangement), all languages are alike in their "deep structures", i.e. the underlying abstract stratum which determines the meaning of sentences and which is, somehow, represented in the human mind. This basic similarity of all languages is thus believed to correspond to shared human intellectual capacities.

Modern linguistics of the taxonomic type merely pointing to the infinite diversity of languages in their surface structures, (Chomsky, 1965: 118), has never really refuted the doctrines of classical universal grammar. Taxonomic linguistics has not been able to prove a corresponding diversity of deep structures, because it has never even considered Chomskyan deep structure.[10] Therefore, the findings of modern structural linguistics are not at all incompatible with the assumption of a universal grammar, and Chomsky--in distinguishing again between deep structure and surface structure--feels justified in hypothesizing that all languages are fundamentally alike in their "deep grammar".

Chomsky assumes two general types of universals, substantive and formal universals, which, in turn, may be of a phonological, syntactic or semantic nature. Substantive universals are certain fixed items or categories specified in the vocabulary used to describe a language, i.e. noun, verb, etc. Traditional universal grammar was a theory of substantive universals, since it assumed the existence of certain fixed categories. Formal universals, on the other hand, are more abstract; they relate to the fact that a grammar must meet specific formal conditions. On the semantic level, a formal universal might be the proposition that certain classes

---

[10] cf., however, Hockett (1958: 246-52).

of lexical items meet specified conditions, for example, "artifacts are defined in terms of certain human goals, needs, and functions instead of solely in terms of physical qualities" (Chomsky, 1965: 29).

Chomsky himself only tentatively suggests the general outline for these types of universals without proposing an actual list of specific universals. He is, in fact, rather cautious:

> The existence of deep-seated formal universals... implies that all languages are cut to the same pattern, but does not imply that there is any point by point correspondence between particular languages. (Chomsky, 1965: 30)

And, with direct relevance to our issue of the possibility of translation, Chomsky continues:

> It does not, for example, imply that there must be some reasonable procedure for translating between languages... The possibility of a reasonable procedure for translation between arbitrary languages depends on the sufficiency of substantive universals. In fact, although there is much reason to believe that languages are to a significant extent cast in the same mold, there is little reason to suppose that reasonable procedures of translation are in general possible. (Chomsky, 1965: 30;202)

Chomsky explains, however, that by a "reasonable procedure" he means one that "does not involve extralinguistic information, that is, one that does not incorporate an 'encyclopedia'" (1965: 202). Chomsky is right: translation without such an "encyclopedia" is impossible. As we have seen, translation must rely on a knowledge of the world; it has to take extralinguistic factors, the whole cultural and situational context, into account. The enormous difficulties and, according to many experts, notably Bar-Hillel (1964: 174-84), the ultimate impossibility of machine

translation rest precisely on the fact that an encyclopedic background knowledge of the cultures concerned is required in translation--a knowledge the machine will never have.

Because of their abstract "deep" nature, universals can never imply a surface equivalence between languages. Thus, they cannot serve as a basis for constructing rules of practical procedure in translating. Nevertheless, as Chomsky himself states, the existence of substantive universals is still relevant for the theoretical possibility of translation; and, certainly the degree of translatability is highly dependent upon them. Let us, therefore, look at some other, more specific proposals of universals made within the framework of transformational-generative grammar.

Manfred Bierwisch (1966: 119) assumes that all the basic syntactic notions of subject, predicate, object, verb, noun, etc. form a set of substantive syntactic universals from which each language draws its particular set--which is exactly what the traditional universal grammarians assume.

Further investigations into the question of substantive semantic universals have been made especially by Jerrold J. Katz and Jerry A. Fodor (1964). They approach the problem of meaning through so-called "componential analysis", i.e. the description of the structure of the vocabulary of a language in terms of a set of very general conceptual elements. In this approach, the meaning of a lexical item or dictionary entry is no longer considered to be an unanalysable whole, but is conceived to be composed of minimal content units or "semantic markers",

which reveal both the semantic structure within a dictionary entry and the semantic relations holding between dictionary entries. These semantic markers are theoretical constructs comparable to such scientific contructs as atoms, genes, etc. Examples of such markers are: 'male', 'human', 'animal', 'physical object', 'concrete'. Now, Katz assumes that there exist a universal set of these semantic markers, from which each particular language selects its specific inventory:

> The same representational mechanism for characterizing meanings within a particular natural language... also serves to characterize meanings across natural languages... (Katz, 1967: 129)

These ultimate components do not, however, represent external physical phenomena, but rather psychological conditions for the perception and conceptualization of such phenomena. The semantic markers are thought to represent a universal conceptual system. This assumption, of course, leads to the hypothesis that "all semantic structure might finally be reduced to components representing the basic dispositions of the cognitive and perceptual structure of the human organism," (Bierwisch,1970: 181). The basic semantic features, then, cannot vary from language to language, but are part of a common "language faculty". The differences among the semantic structures of various languages result only from the fact that this psychical-universal inventory can be combined freely and differently in each language. To translate, then, should be easily possible, under these assumptions, because translation involves only the production of a new configuration of potentially known semantic markers--"potentially known" because they represent a universal system underlying all natural languages which corresponds to the cognitive

structure of the mind. Languages being but parallel tools operated in accidentally different, but essentially compatible ways by the same human mind, translation seems always possible.

Also, superficially very different linguistic units, which were said to "mean something different" on account of nuances added or subtracted, are shown to be really equivalent in deep semantic structure. Thus, although the multitude of terms for frozen water in Eskimo may have to be rendered in more complex units in English, the semantic structure of these units expressed in terms of the atomic concepts of semantic markers can, nevertheless, reach equivalence.

This assumption of the innateness of semantic primes--which would gurantee translatability--is, of course, highly hypothetical, and, as Manfred Bierwisch states:

> Almost nothing is known at the moment about the structure of this apparatus of primitive conceptual elements and its relation to the real world. (Bierwisch, 1967: 4)

John Lyons (1969: 472-3), for one, is very skeptical about all speculations of semantic-cognitive universality. He thinks that our present empirical evidence rather refutes than confirms such linguistic-philosophical conjectures. It seems clear that much more work needs to be done in this area in which research is only at its beginning. Relevant recent work include the efforts made by Bierwisch (1967) to establish the universality of semantic markers of adjectivals (e.g. [±verticality] [±space]); and the proposal by Charles J. Fillmore (1968) of a universal system of deep structure cases. Fillmore assumes that the case notions like 'agentive' and 'instrumental' correspond to

innate concepts of judgements human beings make about their environment. In Fillmore's view, the most basic and universal underlying semantic-syntactic relationships are, in fact, cases which were hitherto usually considered rather superficial phenomena. Thus, the manifold surface structure manifestations of cases in different languages (like inflexional endings, prepositions or postpositions) can be reduced to an underlying universal construct of "deep case". The basic semantic representation of deep cases involve a number of noun phrases which form basic case-like relationships with the verb.

Other recent work on universals has been undertaken by Emmon Bach (1965) who tries to establish a universal transformation for relative clauses. Bach (1968) also proposes a different base component for a transformational-generative grammar--one that is of much higher abstractness than had been assumed before. Much more basic than such elements as nouns and verbs, says Bach, is a highly abstract, logical system featuring a "distinction between variables, names, and general 'predicates' which can be n-placed with respect to the number of terms that can occur as their arguments" (1968: 121). Such a system of operators and variables, which no longer classifies lexical items into nouns, verbs, etc., and which would be similar to systems developed by modern logicians like Rudolf Carnap and Hans Reichenbach, reflects the analysis of the most basic conceptual relationships inherent in all human language; and, says Bach:

> Such a system expresses directly the idea that it is possible to convey any conceptual content in any language, even though the particular lexical items available will vary widely from one language to another --a direct denial of the Humboldt-Sapir-Whorf hypothesis in its strongest form. (Bach, 1968: 122)

Bach's idea that all languages are the same at the deepest, most abstract layer seems to provide the strongest argument for the possibility of translation.

We have seen that, given the manifest variety of languages, the many proposals of universals point to the fact that there is, at the same time, a considerable amount of similarity across languages. Of special relevance for a theory of translation is the recent reformulation of the hypothesis of a fundamental alikeness of all languages in their deep structure which corresponds to an innate conceptual system, and is part of the cognitive structure of all men. The fact that the language universals proposed in the framework of both traditional universal grammar and transformational-generative grammar point to the common psycho-biological nature of all languages, provides strong support for intertranslatability among natural languages. Some recent research modifying the earlier view that certain fixed categories, as noun, verb, etc., can be found in the underlying structure of all languages, and suggesting instead a much more abstract nature of the universal base, seems to be most promising.

Languages, then, are seen to differ mostly in the selection and low-level physical realization of elements taken from a deep, universal stock. But even these low-level differences can be overcome in translation because language--especially on the level of lexis--is not "closed", but "open", extensible. Language as a creative system, as <u>energeia</u>, is thus itself the most important "universal" for translation. All languages are equally well equipped to express <u>ad hoc</u> any aspect of human life as the need arises. In Jakobson's words:

> All cognitive experience and its classification is conveyable in any existing language. Whenever there is deficiency, terminology may be qualified and amplified by loan words or loan translations, neologisms, or semantic shifts, and finally by circumlocutions. (Jakobson, 1966: 234)

C. Limits of Translatability

Given Jakobson's "law of universal translatability", we should nevertheless not forget that there do exist certain limits to translatability. We have already seen that the possibility of translation is restricted if we take connotations into account; also, an absence of objective knowledge of the cultural and situational context of a linguistic unit on the part of the translator makes translation impossible. However, the most formidable hindrance to translatability occurs in all cases in which language adopts a different function over and above its "normal" communicative function. We shall consider three such cases in the following section:

1. Translatability is limited whenever the form of a linguistic unit takes on special importance. "L'intraduisibilité commence exactement là où la forme devient un élément signifiant" (Söll, 1971: 28). Thus, we can qualify the dictum of universal translatability as Nida and Taber did: "Anything that can be said in one language can be said in another, unless the form is an essential element of the message" (Nida and Taber, 1969: 4).

Form, of course, plays an important role in literary works, especially in poetry, which, according to Jakobson (1966: 238), is by definition untranslatable. In poetry, only the creation of a completely

new product is possible, "creative transposition" takes over where translation finds its limit. In literary works, meaning and form operate together; they are no longer arbitrarily connected. Therefore, the form cannot be changed without a corresponding change in meaning. Since the form cannot be detached from its meaning, this meaning can never be expressed in other ways: paraphrases, commentary, explanation, the coining, or borrowing of new words--all of which render pragmatic translation possible--are not sufficient in literary translation. In Saussurean terms, this untranslatability of literature, especially of poetry, may be stated thus: The signifiers of one language (S1) have an autonomous value, and can therefore not be exchanged for the signifiers of another language (S2) although they may express the same signified concept: S1 ≠ S2 (Politzer, 1956: 321). Obviously, the physical nature of any signifier in language A cannot be duplicated in a signifier in language B; therefore, the relations of signifier to signified in language A, which is no longer arbitrary in literature, can never be rendered in language B.

2. Similar considerations also apply to another domain of untranslatability which we may sum up under the rubric <u>metalanguage</u>. If language is part of reality, and if all aspects of reality can be expressed in any language, it is also possible to talk about language. This is metalanguage, i.e. all cases in which language is not only the medium of communication, but also the object of communication. Such metalanguage is untranslatable (Coseriu, 1970: 120). For example, in the English sentence <u>You have again written "skill" with a "c" instead</u>

of a "k", "skill", "c", and "k" are not translatable. Since the physical nature of the word "skill" cannot be duplicated in any other language, translation is impossible.

Ludwig Söll (1971: 28), suggests, however, that cases of metalanguage should not be regarded as untranslatable, but rather be solved by what he calls metatranslation ("metatraduction"). The above example could, for instance, be "metatranslated" into German in the following way: Du hast wieder "skill" mit "c" geschrieben anstatt mit "k". Söll (1971: 28) gives another example of a metatranslation: the French sentence Tu as confondu "chair" et "viande" can be translated into German as Du hast die Wörter für "lebendes Fleisch" und "Fleisch zum Verzehr" verwechselt.

3. A third instance of untranslatability also concerns cases in which language is used differently from its communicative function: cases of plays on language, i.e. puns or intentional ambiguities, which are so closely tied to the semantic peculiarities of a particular language system that they cannot be translated. The English pun Is life worth living? It depends upon the liver is not translatable because the double reference of liver cannot, in principle, be reproduced in another language. In Saussurean terms, the ambiguity is due to the fact that the entire value of the sign, i.e. meaning from the point of view of langue, plays a role in the actual use of the sign (Politzer, 1956: 320). As we have seen, the values determined by two incommensurable language systems can never be matched; therefore, translation is impossible.

Another instance of play on language which is invariably lost in translation is the case of evocative names used frequently in literary works. Leonard Forster (1958: 26) cites the example of a German novel to be translated into English, in which the principal character was called Egbert abbreviated Eg. Because of the evocativeness of Eg in English, this name was impossible in the English translation; for Egbert was not a comic character, and the novel a very serious one...

4. A further limit of translatability is found if we abandon the view of language as a homogeneous entity. In regarding translation as falling within the domain of parole, (the actual production of particular utterances), we have to part with the view of an ideal speaker-hearer living and communicating in a uniform, unvaried speech community (as is, for instance, assumed in the transformational-generative model of grammar), and take the reality of intralinguistic variation into account. In doing so, we have to consider that linguistic usage always reflects certain extralinguistic factors, notably sociological and geographical ones, such as age, socio-economic status, educational level, sex, religious affiliation, regional variety. Also, we have to make allowance for the fact that not only are there dialectal variations among groups of people, but also, that each individual speaks differently at different times, and has a range of linguistic choices available to him. Thus, we must take different levels of usage or stylistic variations into account, e.g. frozen, formal, consultative, casual, or intimate styles (Joos, 1961), or whatever alternative classification we may use.

Since each language is unique in its diversification, translatability of intralinguistic variation is severely curbed. It is usually quite impossible to render these variations in a satisfactory manner. Although, for instance, in the translation of dialectal passages, translators often try to reach "functional equivalence" by resorting to presumably corresponding dialects in the source language, this remains ultimately unsatisfactory because of the inevitable loss of connotations. Here again translation becomes mainly an art, depending on the skill of the individual translator in creating a different (if comparable) version of the original.

Our discussion of the possibilities and impossibilities of translation has shown that an all-or-none answer is out of the question. The two extreme positions of dogmatic, a priori translatability and untranslatability, both of which translators have all along intuitively felt to be wrong, have been replaced here by a more differentiated response. The application of linguistic theory has helped to throw into relief strong arguments both for and against translatability.

The optimism that everything could always be readily translated from one language into any other language, based on the traditional notion of the vocabulary as a simple nomenclature cannot be maintained. The segmentation of reality is arbitrary, and varies from language to language. Thus, translation from the point of view of langue is impossible because of the incompatibility of any two language systems; word-by-word translation is infeasible for the same reason. This can be critical if an untranslatable term is a key notion in the whole text. In general, units smaller than the sentence will rarely be uniquely

translatable. The more of the context is known, the greater the possibility of disambiguation and translation. However, translation from the viewpoint of parole is possible; while the sense of lexical items cannot be held invariant, similarity of reference and identity of application make translation possible.

Translation is impossible for all those who believe in the inaccessibility of meaning on account of a strong version of linguistic relativism, since for them translation means a kind of spiritual metamorphosis. Many arguments advanced by philosophers, psychologists, and linguists seem to suggest that a strong version of linguistic relativity cannot be upheld; there is no absolute untranslatability. Differences in worldview, to the extent that they exist, are most likely the result of differences in culture rather than conditioned by linguistic differences.

Thus, translation is facilitated if there is access to the meaning of a linguistic unit through objective--at best, encyclopedic--knowledge of the cultural and situational context. Translation is a dynamic process of languages in contact; the more is known about another language and culture, and the greater the convergence of two linguistic and cultural communities, the greater translatability will be. Finally, translation is possible if one assumes that there exist many fundamental syntactic and semantic similarities between languages, and if one believes that all languages can be ultimately reduced to a universal human language, which is a creative instrument capable of expressing any human experience.

Limits are put on translatability, conversely, if there is a lack of knowledge of the cultural and situational context in which a text is embedded; if we take connotations and intralinguistic variation into account; and in certain cases in which language is used over and above its normal, communicative function.

# CHAPTER VI

## OUTLOOK

Far from being either a futile undertaking or a dull and simple exercise in substituting signs in one language for signs in another language, translation appears as a much more complex task than might have been thought, and yet, it is a relatively feasible operation. Translation as an instance of two languages and cultures in contact, as a feat of bilingualism and biculturalism, seems altogether too important, and too fascinating a topic to be dismissed lightly as passé in the teaching of foreign languages; translation is, in fact, always involved in the bilingual situation of a foreign language classroom, whether one openly admits it or not. In a classroom, a foreign language is usually learned on the basis of previous knowledge of the mother tongue; consequently, students tend to contrast their native language with the foreign language, and they are likely to compare cultural features of the two language communities in order to discover similarities and divergencies. Since the interference of the mother tongue--one of the greatest obstacles in learning a foreign language--cannot be denied, it seems better to channel it in a constructive way. Translation, which involves the open contrast of two languages and two cultures, might be one way of giving some guidance in such cases of intuitive juxtaposition and unconscious interference.

As we have seen (above, pp. 52-54), there is some debate about the very justification of distinguishing between the fortunate coordinate bilingual who thinks in whatever language he happens to be using, thus avoiding translation altogether, and the much-blamed compound bilingual who suffers from constant interference of his dominant native language, out of which he habitually (and wrongly) translates. However, even if we do accept the theoretical construct of compound and coordinate bilingualism, it is not at all proven that the use of translation will necessarily produce compound bilinguals and not coordinate ones. Therefore, it seems advisable to abstain from any premature stigmatization of translation as a cause of the wrong kind of bilingualism.

Also, the value of translation as an end in itself should not be summarily condemned; once its nature and difficulties are fully grasped, translation might be considered a valuable social skill to be taught to language learners.

Translation may thus well be a worthwhile and promising activity to be looked at afresh in the context of language teaching. If this study could make some contribution towards a clarification of the concept of translation as a basis for a subsequent objective reconsideration of translation--both as an end and a means in language teaching--it has fulfilled its purpose.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


Aginsky, Bert W. and Ethel G. Aginsky

1948 "The Importance of Language Universals", Word 4:3. 168-72.

Amos, Flora Ross

1920 Early Theories of Translation. Folcroft, Pa.: The Writer.

Bach, Emmon

1965 "On Some Recurrent Types of Transformations", in Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics. Ed. by Charles W. Kreidler, no. 18. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 3-18.

1968 "Nouns and Noun Phrases", in Universals in Linguistic Theory. Ed. by Emmon Bach and Robert T. Harms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 90-122.

Bar-Hillel, Yehoshua

1953 "Some Linguistic Problems Connected with Machine Translation", Philosophy of Science 20. 217-25.

1964 Language and Information. Reading, Mass.: Addison, Wesley.

Basilius, Harold

1952 "Neo-Humboldtian Ethnolinguistics", Word 8:2. 95-105.

Belyayev, B. V.

1963 The Psychology of Teaching Foreign Languages. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Bierwisch, Manfred

1966 "Strukturalismus: Geschichte, Probleme und Methoden", Kursbuch 5. 77-152.

1967 "Some Semantic Universals of German Adjectivals", Foundations of Language 3. 1-36.

1970 "Semantics", in New Horizons in Linguistics. Ed. by John Lyons. Harmondsworth: Penguin. 166-84.

Black, Max

1959 "Linguistic Relativity: The Views of Benjamin Lee Whorf", The Philosophical Review 68. 228-38.

Bloomfield, Leonard

1933 Language. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Bolinger, Dwight

1965/66 "Transformulation: Structural Translation", Acta Linguistica Hafniensia 9:2. 130-44.

1968 Aspects of Language. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Booth, A.D. (ed.)

1958 Aspects of Translation. London: Secker and Warburg.

Brang, Peter

1955 "Das Problem der Übersetzung in sowjetischer Sicht", Sprachforum 1. 124-34.

Brooks, Nelson

1964 Language and Language Learning. 2nd ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Brower, Reuben A. (ed.)

1966 On Translation. New York: Oxford University Press.

Brown, Roger L.

1967 Wilhelm von Humboldt's Conception of Linguistic Relativity. The Hague: Mouton.

Brown, Roger W. and Eric H. Lenneberg

1954 "A Study in Language and Cognition", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 49. 454-62.

Brown, Roger W.

1957 "Linguistic Determinism and the Part of Speech", Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology 55. 1-5.

1958 Words and Things. Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press.

Carroll, John B.

1963 "Linguistic Relativity, Contrastive Linguistics, and Language Learning", IRAL 1:1. 1-20.

Cary, Edmond

1957 "Théories soviétiques de la traduction", Babel 3:4. 179-90.

Casagrande, Joseph B.

1954 "The Ends of Translation", IJAL 20:4. 335-40.

Catford, J.C.

1965 A Linguistic Theory of Translation. London: Oxford University Press.

1966 "Rapport: les problèmes pédagogiques de la traduction", in Actes du Premier Colloque International de Linguistique Appliqué, Octobre, 1964. Nancy: Faculté des lettres et des sciences humaines de l'université de Nancy. 286-307.

Chase, Stuart

1953 The Power of Words. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Chomsky, Noam

1957 Syntactic Structures. The Hague: Mouton

1965 Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press

Coseriu, Eugenio

1970 "Bedeutung und Bezeichnung im Lichte der strukturellen Semantik", in Sprachwissenschaft und Übersetzen. Ed. by P. Hartmann and H. Vernay. Munich: Hueber. 104-21.

Delavenay, Emile

1960 An Introduction to Machine Translation. New York: Praeger.

Despatie, Gérard

1967 "Modern Linguistic Research Applied to the Process of Translation", Unpublished Ed. D. Dissertation, Columbia University.

Dodson, C. J.

1967 Language Teaching and the Bilingual Method. London: Pitman.

Dostert, Leon E.

1955a "The Georgetown IBM Experiment", in Machine Translation of Languages. Ed. by William N. Locke and A.D. Booth. New York: Wiley. 124-35.

Dostert, Leon E.

1955b "Problems of Translation: Introductory Remarks", in Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics. Ed. by R. Hirsch Weinstein, no. 8. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 77-9.

Dressler, Wolfgang

1970 "Textsyntax und Übersetzen", in Sprachwissenschaft und Übersetzen. Ed. by P. Hartmann and H. Vernay. Munich: Hueber. 64-77.

Ellis, J. and J. N. Ure

1969 "Language Varieties: Register", in Encyclopedia of Linguistics, Information and Control. Ed. by A. R. Meetham and R. A. Hudson. London: Pergamon Press. 251-9.

Ervin, Susan M. and Charles E. Osgood

1965 "Second Language Learning and Bilingualism", in Psycholinguistics: A Survey of Theory and Research Problems. Ed. by Charles E. Osgood and Thomas A. Sebeok. Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press. 139-45.

Fedorov, Andrei V.

1958 Vvedenie v teoriiu perevoda. 2nd ed. [An Introduction to the Theory of Translation] Moscow: Izd. Lit. na Inostr. Jazykax. [First edition 1953].

Feuer, Lewis S.

1953 "Sociological Aspects of the Relation between Language and Philosophy", Philosophy of Science 20:2. 85-99.

Fillmore, Charles J.

1968 "The Case for Case", in Universals in Linguistic Theory. Ed. by Emmon Bach and Robert T. Harms. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston. 1-88.

Firth, John Rupert

1957 Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951. London: Oxford University Press.

1968 "Linguistics and Translation", in Selected Papers of J. R. Firth 1952-1959. Ed. by F. R. Palmer. London: Longmans. 84-95.

Fishman, Joshua A.

1960 "A Systematization of the Whorfian Hypothesis", Behavioral Science 5. 323-39.

Flavell, John H.

1958 "A Test of the Whorfian Theory", Psychological Reports 4. 455-62.

Forster, Leonard

1966 "Translation: An Introduction", in Aspects of Translation. (cf. Booth) 1-28.

Freudenthal, Hans W.

1942 "The Problem of Translating", Modern Language Journal 26. 62-5.

Gipper, Helmut

1966 Sprachliche und geistige Metamorphosen bei Gedichtübersetzungen: eine sprachvergleichende Untersuchung zur Erhellung deutsch - französischer Geistesverschiedenheit. Düsseldorf: Schwann.

Greenberg, Joseph H. (ed.)

1963a Universals of Language. 2nd ed. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press

Greenberg, Joseph H.

1963b "Some Universals of Grammar with Particular Reference to the Order of Meaningful Elements", in Universals of Language. (cf. Greenberg, 1963a) 73-113.

1966 Language Universals. The Hague: Mouton.

Haas, W.

1962 "The Theory of Translation", Philosophy 37. 208-28.

Hall, Robert A., Jr.

1964 Idealism in Romance Linguistics. Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press.

Halliday, M. A. K., Angus McIntosh and Peter Strevens

1964 The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching. London: Longmans.

Hjelmslev, Louis

1963 Prolegomena to a Theory of Language. [Reprint of 1961 revised English edition] trans. by F. J. Whitfield. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

Hockett, Charles F.

1954a "Translation via Immediate Constituents", IJAL 20:4. 313-5.

Hockett, Charles F.

1954b "Chinese versus English: An Exploration of the Whorfian Hypothesis", in Language in Culture. Ed. by Harry Hoijer. Chicago: Chicago University Press. 106-23.

1958 A Course in Modern Linguistics. New York: Macmillan.

1963 "The Problem of Universals in Language", in Universals of Language. (cf. Greenberg, 1963a) 1-29.

Hörmann, Hans

1971 Psycholinguistics: An Introduction to Research and Theory. trans. by H. H. Stern. Berlin: Springer.

Humboldt, Wilhelm von

1960 Über die Verschiedenheit des menschlichen Sprachbaues and ihren Einfluss auf die geistige Entwicklung des Menschengeschlechts. Bonn: Dümmler. [Facsimile edition of the 1836 edition].

IJAL

1954 International Journal of American Linguistics. [Translation Issue] 20:4.

Jakobson, Roman

1963 "Implications of Language Universals For Linguistics", in Universals of Language. (cf. Greenberg, 1963a) 263-78.

1966 "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation", in On Translation. (cf. Brower) 232-9.

Joos, Martin

1961 The Five Clocks. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Jumpelt, Rudolf W.

1961 Die Übersetzung naturwissenschaftlicher und technischer Literatur. Berlin: Langenscheidt.

Kade, Otto

1968 Zufall und Gesetzmässigkeit in der Übersetzung. Leipzig: VEB Verlag Enzyklopädie.

Katz, Jerrold J. and Jerry A. Fodor

1964 "The Structure of a Semantic Theory" in The Structure of Language: Readings in the Philosophy of Language. Ed. by J.A. Fodor and J.J. Katz. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall. 479-518.

Katz, Jerrold J.

1967 "Recent Issues in Semantic Theory", Foundations of Language 3. 124-94.

Kirkwood, H. W.

1966 "Translation as a Basis for Contrastive Linguistic Analysis", IRAL 4. 175-82.

Kloepfer, Rolf

1967 Die Theorie der literarischen Übersetzung. Munich: Fink.

Koller, Werner

1971 "Grundlagen der Übersetzungswissenschaft", Die Neueren Sprachen 3. 158-60.

Langacker, Ronald W.

1967 Language and its Structure. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

Lee, Dorothy D.

1944 "Linguistic Reflection of Winter Thought", IJAL 10:4 181-7.

1960 "Lineal and Nonlineal Codifications of Reality", in Explorations in Communication. Ed. by E. Carpenter and M. McLuhan. 136-54.

Lenneberg, Eric H.

1953 "Cognition in Ethnolinguistics". Language 29. 463-71.

Lenneberg, Eric H. and J. M. Roberts

1956 The Language of Experience. Baltimore: Indiana University Publications in Anthropology and Linguistics, Memoir 13.

Longacre, Robert E.

1956 Review of W. B. Urban "Language and Reality" and B. L. Whorf "Four Articles of Metalinguistics", Language 32. 298-308.

Lyons, John

1966 "Towards a 'Notional' Theory of the 'Parts of Speech'", Journal of Linguistics 2. 209-36.

1969 Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

McNamara, John

1970 "Bilingualism and Thought", in Monograph Series on Languages and Linguistics. Ed. by J. E. Alatis, no. 23. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press. 25-40.

Malinowski, Bronislaw

1935 Coral Gardens and Their Magic. II. London: Allen and Unwin.

Meillet, Antoine

1964 Introduction à l'étude comparative des langues indo-européennes. University, Ala.: University of Alabama Press. [Reprint of the 1937 edition].

Miller, Robert L.

1968 The Linguistic Relativity Principle and Humboldtian Ethnolinguistics. The Hague: Mouton.

Moon, Parry and Domina Eberle Spencer

1946 "Internationality in the Names of Scientific Concepts: A Method of Naming Concepts", American Journal of Physics 14. 285-93.

Mounin, Georges

1963 Les problèmes théoriques de la traduction. Paris: Gallimard.

Müller, Dietrich and Richard Rothenhagen

1966 "Bericht über die wissenschaftliche Konferenz des Dolmetscher-Instituts der KMU Leipzig," Fremdsprachen no. 2. 102-7.

Nida, Eugene A.

1945 "Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation Problems", Word 1. 194-208.

1964 Toward a Science of Translating. Leiden: Brill.

1969 "Science of Translation", Language 45:3. 483-98.

Nida, Eugene A. and Charles R. Taber

1969 The Theory and Practice of Translation. Leiden: Brill.

Öhman, Suzanne

1959 "Der Sinnbezirk von 'Spiel' im Deutschen und Schwedischen an Hand von Huizinga's 'Homo Ludens'", in Sprache: Schlüssel zur Welt. Ed. by H. Gipper. Düsseldorf: Schwann. 323-53.

Ortega y Gasset, José

1960 Miseria y Esplendor de la Traducción: Elend und Glanz der Übersetzung. 3rd. ed. trans. by G. Kilpper. Ebenhausen: Langewiesche-Brandt.

Percival, Keith

1966 "A Reconsideration of Whorf's Hypothesis", Anthropological Linguistics 8:8. 1-12.

Politzer, Robert L.

1956 "A Brief Classification of the Limits of Translatability", Modern Language Journal 40. 319-22.

Postgate, John Percival

1922 Translation and Translations. London: Bell.

Rabin, C.

1958 "The Linguistics of Translation", in Aspects of Translation. (cf. Booth) 123-45.

Robins, R. H.

1964 General Linguistics: An Introductory Survey. London: Longmans.

Roget, Peter Mark

1947 Thesaurus of English Words and Phrases. London: Longmans. [Introduction by Peter Mark Roget 1852].

Sapir, Edward

1921 Language. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World.

1949 "The Status of Linguistics as a Science", in Selected Writings of Edward Sapir. Ed. by David G. Mandelbaum. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press. 160-6.

Saussure, Ferdinand de

1949 Cours de linguistique générale. 4th ed. Ed. by Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye. Paris: Payot. [First ed. 1915].

Savory, Théodore

1968 The Art of Translation. Boston: The Writer.

Seuren, P. A. M.

1969 "La G. G. T. et la théorie de la traduction", Le Langage et L'Homme 10. 41-50.

Sölll, Ludwig

1971 "Traduisibilité et Intraduisibilité", Meta 16:1/2. 25-31.

Störig, Hans Joachim (ed.)

1963 Das Problem des Übersetzens. Stuttgart: Goverts.

Thornton-Smith, C. B.

1967 A Case for Translation, Washington D.C.: Educational Resources Information Center.

Trier, Jost

1934 "Das sprachliche Feld", Neue Jahrbücher für Wissenschaft und Bildung 10. 428-49.

1968 Altes und Neues vom sprachlichen Feld. Mannheim: Dudenverlag.

Tytler, Alexander Fraser

1907 Essay on the Principles of Translation. London: Dent.

Ullmann, Stephen

1967 Semantics: An Introduction to the Science of Meaning. Oxford: Blackwell. [Reprint of 1962 edition].

Vinay, J. P. and J. Darbelnet

1967 Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais. 2nd ed. Paris: Didier. [First edition 1958].

Voegelin, C. F.

1954 "Multiple Stage Translation", IJAL 20:4. 271-80.

Vossler, Karl

1932 The Spirit of Language in Civilization. trans. by O. Oeser. London: Kegan Paul.

Walmsley, John B.

1970 "Transformational Theory and Translation", IRAL 8:3. 185-98.

Weinreich, Uriel

1963 Languages in Contact. The Hague: Mouton [Originally published as no. 1 in the series "Publications of the Linguistic Circle of New York", 1953].

Weisgerber, Leo

1955 "Das Dolmetschen und die sprachliche Verwandlung der Welt", Babel 1:1. 7-9.

1964 Zur Grundlegung der ganzheitlichen Sprachauffassung. Düsseldorf: Schwann.

Whorf, Benjamin Lee

1956 Language, Thought and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf. Ed. by J. B. Carroll. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

Winter, Werner

1961 "Impossibilities of Translation", in The Craft and Context of Translation. Ed. by W. Arrowsmith and R. Shattuck. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press. 68-82.